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THE SPIRIT OF THE AGE IN LITERATURE

by G. K. Chesterton

THE Spirit of the Age is not a Spirit; it is not really spiritual, for by definition it is not immortal. If the phrase in relation to literature is already almost traditional, it is a series of monuments of mortality. Hazlitt used it, I think, to summarize his sketches; and it is amusing to reflect how different has been the age on which we look back from that to which Hazlitt looked forward. He was as far out in the change he hoped for as in the things he thought unchangeable; it would have surprised him, for instance, to learn that he could not take one of his country walks, and give himself up to thinking, without being killed by about six successive motor-cars. Matthew Arnold, writing round about 1870, used a similar phrase but carefully translated it into German. It is again amusing to think that if he had lived till 1914, he would have hurriedly translated it back into English. By which I do not mean that he was either a snob or a turncoat, but that he believed in the Spirit of the Age and suffered accordingly. And it is obvious that what is roughly and rather inaccurately called the Post-War world has a new atmosphere of its own, not only different from all that Hazlitt or Arnold knew, but very different from all that Hazlitt or Arnold expected.

This atmosphere in all the arts, and notably in literature, is easily discernible, though not perhaps easily definable. If we were forced to fix on a single word, perhaps the word Syncopation would best express the artistic element; for syncope, which in medicine is a malady, in esthetics is a movement. To put it less pedantically, the world has shown a disposition to come out in spots, even if we admit that some of them are beauty spots. A quality which literary reviewers suddenly started calling sporadic, but which those who love the noble English language will prefer to call patchy, appeared simultaneously in all the arts; music cut up into notes, pictures cut up into cubes, prose cut up into impressions and episodes, and poetry often cut up into isolated images. There went with this a love, not only of vivid or violent color, but of very jagged outline or pattern; as if to emphasize the fact of something broken off sharply from everything else. In the case of literature, the thing

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so broken off was the individual mind, or even a subdivision of the individual mind. It has been said that Protestantism isolated the soul; however this may be, it is true that this kind of modernism isolates not only the mind but the mood. It not only cuts up mankind into men, but it actually cuts up a man into moods. That is the fairest way of judging much that is severely judged in the irresponsibility and anarchy of some sex novels, by novelists not personally ignoble. Quite apart from morality, the old love story had a natural artistic unity, for it had a single end, apart from a happy ending. But the story not of love but of loves, under existing conditions, is bound to be a string of episodes without much effect on each other, for that is how the man of that school regards them. It may be very wrong to hunt a boar or a stag, but you could make a hunting song of it, or a story with a climax when the wild boar turned to bay. But if your philosophy is hardly even that of a naturalist catching butterflies, but almost that of an idler or idiot catching flies, you cannot make a climax, but only a series. One effect of this isolation is a certain irresponsibility about communal ideals, which can be best exemplified in poetry; since it contrasts so sharply with the old world of William Morris or Walt Whitman. The change is in the loss of positive ideals. Whitman was an enthusiast for Democracy; his countryman, Mr. Mencken, to put it mildly, is not an enthusiast for Democracy; but neither is he an enthusiast for anything opposed to Democracy. Morris's Earthly Paradise does not exist on earth, but Mr. Aldous Huxley will believe in a heavenly paradise long before he believes in an earthly one.

When Swinburne called his work *Songs before Sunrise*, and posed as a prophet wrapped in a mantle watching the red daybreak of revolution, he was almost exactly like the man in Mark Twain who came out hurriedly, bundled in a blanket, to watch the sun rise on the Alps, and after watching the orb anxiously for some time, found he was just in time to see it set. Swinburne's republicanism was red enough in color, if rather cloudy in form, but it was certainly the red of sunset and the reverse of the red of dawn. The epoch which he supposed to be beginning was in fact at that very moment ending, and we could hardly do better in dating the present literary epoch than to date it from that sad Swinburnian end. To take a metaphor even more Swinburnian than that of sunrise, he was the last foaming wave, sometimes (it might be hinted) a rather frothy wave, which made the high-water mark of that great flood-tide, which in politics we call the French Revolution, and in poetry measure by the names of Shelley and Landor and Béranger and Victor Hugo; with some previous movements in Burns or Blake. Roughly speaking, Shelley was at the beginning of the period and Swinburne at the end of it, and between them was all that counted of the movement which identified poets with prophets of revolt, which set the laurel crown of the bard directly against the golden crown of all other kings, and conceived the lyre as chiefly strung to sound the praises of Liberty. That conception is dead. It died, not so much when Swinburne died, but rather when Swinburne wrote his first Imperial sonnet in praise of the South African war.

It is rather odd to remark, in passing, and rather salutary for professional revolutionists and pioneers, that there is almost always a sort of break, of boredom or disgust, immediately after some very flamboyant figure has defied the convention, and therefore become the fashion. The Bohemian, who is seen everywhere in Society, boldly despising Society, has a high old time while it lasts, and really makes the best of both worlds, the wilderness and the drawing-room; but it does not last very long. Very early in the nineteenth century, it was already old-fashioned to enjoy Byron; as it will never be old-fashioned to enjoy Chaucer or Homer. The ringlets and whiskers of his darkling heroes and

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heroines soon began to have a particular sort of staleness, which does not apply to monkish tonsures or ancient Argive beards. It is the staleness of old fashion-plates, which is never felt in old pictures. The Byronic spirit became old-fashioned because it had been the fashion; but, above all, because it had been the very latest, loudest, most daring and revolutionary fashion. When somebody or something has reached that wild, supreme ecstasy of novelty, it is suddenly stricken old, and stamped forever with its date and death. Nobody can carry it any further; nobody wants to do it again; nobody even wants to do it better. It has been too much of a success, and something of a secret and subtle vulgarity, that lies in the very heart of success, has become flagrant in it and sent forth a savor of shame. And by this I mean a general truth about human life, not a petty sneer at the personal life of Byron, whom I admire as a poet and even sympathize with as a man, much more than it is now the fashion to do. But it is true that because Byron was a man full of the Spirit of the Age, his very portrait seemed rapidly to grow aged; like the portrait of Dorian Gray. And similarly, it was because Swinburne was so very certain that he was a revolutionary poet that there is a reaction against him even as a poet, and an utter oblivion of him as a revolutionary. This does not prove that it is wrong to be a revolutionary; on the contrary, many of the things against which Byron and Swinburne revolted were in fact very revolting. But it does mean that this sort of innovation and insurrection is likely to be as much disliked immediately after its triumph as immediately before. The rebel may be right to make a rebellion, but he will not make a dynasty. The man most brilliant and conspicuous with the Spirit of the Age will have an air of horrible and offensive familiarity to the people of the next age. I will not apply the parable in any personal fashion, but it is well to realize that, if there be anywhere at this moment a man who seems vivid and vibrant with the new forces in literature, picked out by the spotlight in the perfect jazz pattern, and moving in faultless triumph to the vital and essential jazz tune, we may be sure it is that man, and no milder specimen, who will seem in forty years as faded as a rhetorical ode to Julia or Matilda, or the Byronic verses in an old album about a rose and a tear.

Let us realize to start with, therefore, that in so far as the Spirit of the Age is only the Spirit of the Age, and it is not also the Spirit of the Ages, and of all that is before and after the ages, it is a spirit that very quickly evaporates, and perhaps most quickly where it has seemed particularly pungent and strong. Byron and Swinburne did, in their day, emphatically go to our heads; but, to judge by current criticism, they have left many with little more than headaches. This is most notable in the criticism of poetry; but it is still more notable that so much of the poetry is criticism. We need not discuss fully the justice or injustice of the charges of mere ugliness and unworthiness made against recent verse. But nobody will deny the general sense in which Swinburne, if not one of the most perfect of poets, was at least one of the most poetical of poets. And no one will deny that, in comparison at least, he has been followed very abruptly by a race of prosaic poets. Much of it is merely negative and destructive; the sort of analysis that has generally been presented in prose. Swinburne was accused of sacrificing sense to sound, or of writing mere nonsense for the sake of melody. Some of the new poets write what a coarse careless world might mistake for nonsense; but they never bribe or insult us with anything that we could mistake for melody. I confess I think the charge against Swinburne was sometimes just; that having said, "With life before and after", which might mean something, though the opposite of what Swinburne meant, he went on cheerfully to add, "And death beneath and above", which means nothing at all. I admit that merely to provide a rhyme for the beautiful line "Blos-

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som by blossom, the spring begins", he did not scruple to write of "the season of snows and sins", as if the most respectable people were always wicked in winter. But I think it will also be admitted, on the other side, that a recent poet who announced his intentions in the lines

> And I shall sing
> By the blood in stone images—

also indicates a purpose that is not entirely clear; and that on the other hand, when it comes to singing, stone images do not sing quite so successfully as Swinburne.

This, however, is merely a superficial view of the contrast; and by itself would make the critic figure far too much as a *laudator temporis acti*. I am in no way tied to defend the nonsense of the Swinburne period, any more than the nonsense of the Ezra Pound period, but I am quite ready to recognize the sense in both, and especially the sense in which the two senses are separate. And I began this sketch with the name of Swinburne, because, while it is the latest and nearest of the great names of the nineteenth century, it also marks the very sharp change to the new atmosphere of the twentieth. And the first change to notice is that which I did in fact notice first; when I spoke of the red daybreak of the revolutionary dreams. One of the things which has suddenly, silently, and curiously completely collapsed, is the notion of an enthusiasm which was poetical and also political. I say an enthusiasm; for the new analytic writers might well be capable of writing political satire. That is, verse which expresses, not our enthusiasm for politics, but our lack of enthusiasm for politicians. It is true that the latest satire is sometimes a little obscure, and that the heartening energy with which the poets hold up a politician to public ridicule and contempt is sometimes a little weakened by the public having a difficulty in grasping what they are talking about, or understanding a word they say. But on that side their work might still be forcible; and need be none the less so for being as involved as Browning or Donne. But the positive, and especially the popular or collective, side of sociology seems to have suddenly become impossible in poetry. Poetry has become more than normally individualistic. The individualist can write a song; but not a song with a chorus.

Such a change in poetry necessarily has causes that are political rather than poetical. I shall therefore say the less about them; especially as the enquiry would involve the explanation of views of my own, which are here irrelevant and seem to some eccentric. My own opinion is that the younger generation, especially the most intelligent among them, are conscious of the coming of a new social system, which they do not either love or desire, but which they do not hate sufficiently to destroy. The idea that Republics would make the world perfect was soon destroyed—by the Republics. The idea that Socialism would make the world perfect has been left in a more kindly haze; because Socialism has been abandoned by the Socialists. But meanwhile the old private property and liberty were being absorbed or destroyed, not by the Socialists, but by the Capitalists. They are being destroyed by the Trusts; by the sort of Business Government now everywhere prevailing. Now poets cannot be expected to sing wild happy lyrics in praise of Business Government. At the same time poets, especially modern poets, cannot be expected to die on the barricades, in a revolution against Business Government. It is to some extent to the interest of poets that people should be business-like—even in the publishing business. So long as the Trust State is fairly humane and works steadily there is nothing to fight about; but there is precious little to sing about. For Business Government has neither authority nor liberty. Whether or no this explanation be right, it is certainly a paradox that this patchy isolation of the mind should exist under social conditions of almost inhuman sameness and centralization. But the

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paradox is in any case a very practical part of the tragedy. Wilde in "The Soul of Man Under Socialism", unconsciously uttered a very profound warning—against Socialism. It was the warning that even under Socialism the soul might have a tragedy like that of Wilde. Under the Servile State the soul will be yet more horribly free. There will be nothing to prevent a man losing his soul, as long as he does not lose his time or his ticket or his place in the bread queue. We need not be surprised, therefore, if the laborious organization and combination of our time encircle a singular loneliness. It is more important to note that the new literature has some of the merits of loneliness; an increasing refusal to be encouraged by newspaper claptrap or made cheerful to order, a certain disgust with Party Systems, and not a little open-mindedness to the ideas of the past as well as the ideas of the future; at least, in the finest minds, a refusal to be tied to the ideas of the present. As usual, the wisest men of the age are not dominated by the spirit of the age. But perhaps the best summary in the matter of our own age would be this; that the stupid people are sneering at the last generation and the intelligent people are sneering at their own generation. But I think it must be admitted that most of them are sneering.

This unsociable quality in the intellect, which can coexist with so much superficial sociability or herding in the habits, is the most outstanding fact about really able writers in recent days. One of its manifestations is a verbal eccentricity in works of a talent that goes beyond the eccentric. It is something like the secret language that is invented by a child. *Ulysses* contains a number of very queer words; though perhaps none queerer than Ulysses. For the comparison is curious in itself, seeing that throughout a prolonged pagan epic Homer manages to be very pure in very plain lauguage, while Joyce manages to be very coarse in very esoteric language. There are whole passages, of the sort on which the moral argument turns, which are dark to the point of decency. He has been compared to Rabelais, but the very comparison should be enough to show us vividly the difference made by the Spirit of the Age. It is the whole force of Rabelais that he seems to roar like ten thousand men; that one of his giants is like a multitude turned into a man. What he roars may not always be very distinct or intelligible, any more than the roar of an actual rabble or mob; but we know that what is being shouted is something quite normal and human, even if it be what some would call bestial. But we do not feel, or at least I do not feel, that James Joyce ever speaks for anybody except James Joyce. We may call this individuality or insanity or genius or what we will; but it belongs to its time because of this air of having invented its own language; and moved a little further away from anything like a universal language. The new Ulysses is the opposite of the old Ulysses, for the latter moved amid ogres and witches with a level-headed and almost prosaic common sense, while the former moves among common lamp-posts and public houses with a fixed attitude of mind more fantastic than all the fairy-tales. I am not here either adequately praising or adequately criticizing this much controverted work; I am merely using it as an illustration of the isolation of one mind, or even of one mood. Rabelais sometimes seems confusing, because he is like twenty men talking at once; but Joyce is rather inaudible, because he is talking to himself.

The late D. H. Lawrence is generally quoted, along with such a writer as James Joyce, as a typical product of the time. Personally I suspect that there was rather more in Lawrence than any mere spirit of any mere age, especially such an age. Whether what was inside him ever really came out of him, or ever came out except tail-foremost, in the wrong order and the wrong proportion, may be more doubtful. I fancy that most of his faults could be referred to the one

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not unpardonable fault of impatience. His time and training made it inevitable that he should grope. But his temper made it natural that he should not so much grope as grab. Like so many men of his type, he started cock-sure that he was right, and gradually grew more and more fruitful and human as he discovered that he was wrong. He would never, naturally enough, have put it in the form that he was wrong; and indeed it would be truer to say that he found himself capable of being much more right. But anyhow, he, much more than any of his comrades and contemporaries, had something of that old religious spirit of the revolutionist; the constructive revolutionist who makes himself responsible for a new world. He did, if in the groping modern fashion, try to get to grips with our ultimate relations with God and woman and nature, and the things on which a new world can be built. He had much more of the childlike and honorable seriousness of men like Morris and Thoreau and Walt Whitman. He did not always sneer. But the moral chaos of his time delayed the self-education of his genius, and it marks the same spirit of syncopation or separatism that it had to be merely self-education. He lived in an age crowded with schools and schooling, and all the things he naturally hated; but there was no education, because there was no tradition. There was no communal inheritance of virtues or right relations, and therefore his virtues, like all the virtues of his generation, had to be individual and rather irritable.

Something of the same abnormal reaction towards the normal may be observed in the ripening of the remarkable talent of Miss Rebecca West, who has of late tended more and more to reconstruct for herself the tradition that her friends have destroyed for her. Her friends and intellectual interests, also, have been more among the survivals of the old visionaries of social construction; the old guard of the systematizers of whom perhaps the last and greatest remains in Mr. Bernard Shaw. We must look elsewhere for a new and clean-cut case of the more modern attitude, and on the whole, perhaps, the last philosophic phase is best expressed in one of the most brilliant of living writers: Mr. Aldous Huxley. He would not even be complimented to be compared to Shelley, and nobody is likely to make the comparison. But he would not even be complimented to be compared to Shaw, in so far as Shaw stands for that stock of nineteenth-century ideals of simplification and perfectibility, which, along with his vegetarianism, Shaw really inherits from Shelley. Mr. Aldous Huxley does not inherit or continue those ideals which broadly began with Rousseau, he turns on them and rends them. He is a very rare specimen, a real realist; in the sense that he is a realist at the expense of new things as well as old and ready to testify against revolt as well as against tyranny. In truth he is ready to testify against anything; it would be rather more difficult to say what he is testifying to or for. Perhaps the change I describe, from the revolt of the nineteenth century to the realism of the twentieth, could not be better measured than by the distance between two dates; the day on which Mr. H. G. Wells, laying the foundations of the first of his Utopias, declared that its first principle should be that Original Sin is a lie—to the day when Mr. Aldous Huxley, heir of the great scientific house in its next generation, wrote that the medieval mind was far wiser than the nineteenth-century minds, because it recognized Original Sin. There is no doubt at all about Mr. Aldous Huxley recognizing Original Sin. There are moments when he seems to drift darkly towards that Calvinist exaggeration that was called Total Depravity. Indeed, while I always admire and often agree with his suggestions, there does seem to be a darker suggestion of that sort of Manichæan mysticism which traced the roots of evil in nature itself; a strange wilderness of vision, without form or frontier, in which everything is repulsive because nothing is

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forbidden. This, being but a guess at the subconscious, is perhaps unfair; it is fairer to say that there returns with Aldous Huxley something of the spirit of Jonathan Swift; the rocky sincerity, the splendid scorn of snobbery, especially intellectual snobbery, the virile impatience with unworthy praise; but, with the rest, something of that strange self-torturing itch of the sensitive man to insist on ugliness because of his love of beauty. In Huxley, as in Swift, the passages called unpleasant are really unpleasant; perhaps they would be worse if they were pleasant. They can hardly be called sensual, for they do not even please the senses. I may well end this rude outline with the name of this remarkable writer, because he does exactly mark the way in which the mind of man has come full circle since the middle of the nineteenth century. He is the low-water mark, as I have said that Swinburne was the high-water mark, of that foaming or frothing sea of humanitarian hope. Yet there was a truth behind the impatient discovery of the Millennium, as well as behind the belated rediscovery of the Fall. Nor will man be permanently satisfied with the pessimism of Huxley, any more than with the optimism of Whitman. For man knows there is that within him which can never be valued too highly, as well as that within him which can never be hated too much; and only a philosophy which emphasizes both, violently and simultaneously, can restore the balance to the brain.

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PRELUDE

by Conrad Aiken

I

And how begin, when there is no beginning?
How end, when there's no ending? How cut off
One drop of blood from other, break the stream
Which, with such subtlety, such magnificent power,
Binds the vast windflower to its throbbing world?
. . . Shall we be bold and say, then, "at this point
The world begins, the windflower ends?" rip out
One bleeding atom, pretend it has no kin? . . .
Or shall we, with the powerful mind, hold off
The sky from earth, the earth from sky, to see
Each perish into nothing?

They will perish:
The drop of blood, the windflower, and the world;
Sound will be silence; meaning will have no meaning.
The blade of grass, in such a light, will grow
Monstrous as Minotaur; the tick of the clock,—
Should it be taken as the clock's dark secret,—
Is chaos and catastrophe; the heart
Cries like a portent in a world of portents,
All meaningless and mad.

II

Softly, together
We tread our little arcs upon our star;
Stare at each other's eyes, and see them thinking;
Lay hands upon our hearts and feel them beating;

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But what precedes the luminous thought, or what
Unnumbered heartbeats timed the beat we feel,—
What burnings up of suns, or deaths of moons,
Shaped them, or what wreckage in time's stream,—
Ignore. . . . And are our footsteps parallel?
Or runs your blood as slow as mine? or comes
The golden crocus, of this April's fiction,
As hotly to your thought as mine? The birds
That throng imagination's boughs, and sing,
Or flash from sward to leaf, for the sheer joy
Of mounting or descending in thought's air;
Or mate in ecstasy, and from that flame
Breed constellations of flame-colored flight:
Come they and go they, love, in your green tree
As swiftly as in mine? was there such singing
In mine as yours, or at the self-same season?
Have I such boughs as you, in the same place;
Or such a surf of leaves, when the wind blows;
Or such a fountain of bright flame, when birds
All skyward mount together?—

So we pace
From here to there, from there to here,—touch hands
As alien each to each as leaf and stone,
One chaos and another. Have good heart!
Your chaos is my world; perhaps my chaos
Is world enough for you. For what's unguessed
Will have such shape and sweetness as the known
Ruins with pour of knowledge. From one bird
We guess the tree, and hear the song; but if
Miraculous vision gives us, all at once,
The universe of birds and boughs, and all
The trees and birds from which their time has come,—
The world is lost. . . .
Love, let us rest in this.

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TWENTY CENTURIES OF VIRGIL

by George Norlin

THE WORLD-WIDE interest which is now being evoked by the twentieth centenary of Virgil's birth is in itself a testimony that no poet has had so firm a hold for so long a time upon the minds and hearts of cultivated men.

In his own lifetime, notwithstanding his humble origin (he was the son of a servant who was later a farmer), and notwithstanding his diffidence (he so depreciated his greatest work that on his death-bed he implored his friends to burn the *Aeneid*), his creative excellence was quickly recognized by his contemporaries. No sooner were his poems published—the *Eclogues*, with their idyllic pictures of simple living amid the charms of nature, the *Georgics*, with their glorification of sweet, laborious days upon the farm, and the *Aeneid*, with its interpretation of the aims and ideals of the Roman Empire—than he was acclaimed as the high spokesman of his time and race. Even before the *Aeneid* was finished, the poet Propertius, who had apparently seen or heard parts of it, predicted that "something greater than the *Iliad* was in process of being born", and when it was published it was at once accepted as the national epic of Rome. Copies of his poems were circulated among all who made pretensions to culture; the *Eclogues* and the *Georgics* were schoolbooks while Virgil was still living; and after his death the *Aeneid* became, what it has remained for centuries, the text-book of western civilization.

During the Middle Ages, Virgil was the one poet of pagan literature who was known, read and revered. His fourth *Eclogue*, in which he predicts the birth of a child who is to usher in a new and better age, was accepted as an inspired Messianic prophecy—a view which survived even in the eighteenth century. Moreover, his gentleness, his sympathy, his solicitude for human suffering, his devotion to what the Romans called *pietas*—a sense of responsibility to God and man—established him as a kindred spirit, *anima naturaliter Christiana*, to the Church. Dante, who represents the culmination of medieval culture, almost worshipped at his shrine. In the *Divine Comedy*, he speaks of him not only as "the Poet", *il poeta*, as if there were no others, but as the "sage guide", "sweet father", "supreme excellence", "high teacher", and "ocean of all wisdom". And Chaucer, the first great poet of the English language, is only slightly less worshipful. He writes, in his *Legend of Good Women*:

> Glory and honour, Virgil Mantuan,
> Be to thy name: And I shal as I can
> Folow thy lantern, as thou gost biforn.

That was before the Renaissance, and it is small wonder that Virgil was thought incomparable during a time when there was at hand no other poet of ancient Greece or Rome with whom he might be compared. The Renaissance rediscovered the lost writers of classical antiquity and made it possible to

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judge Virgil in relation to his great contemporaries and predecessors, especially Homer and Theocritus, his Greek models for the *Aeneid* and the *Eclogues*. But, while from this time on the attitude towards Virgil tends to become more discriminating and less ecstatic, yet there is no sharp break in Virgil's influence between the Middle Ages and the modern age which was ushered in mainly by the Revival of Letters in the fifteenth century. In the sixteenth century, two writers as different as Lord Bacon and Ben Jonson express a judgment which is no less loyal than that of Chaucer, Bacon speaking of him as "the chastest poet and the royalest, Virgilius Maro, that to the memory of man is known", and Ben Jonson characterizing his poetry as

> . . . so rammed with life
> That it shall gather strength of being
> And live hereafter more admired than now.

And as for the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, most writers of the time might have said as did the poet Cowley, that Virgil was the "best poet, whose footsteps they adored". Indeed, until the nineteenth century, it was generally felt and taught that to follow Virgil was the surest way to literary excellence and fame.

It is, at first thought, rather surprising that Virgil should have suffered no eclipse when the Greek poets came again into the ken of western civilization. But Greek was a strange language, mastered with some difficulty, whereas Latin was a familiar tongue; and, furthermore, the time was not yet ripe for the full appreciation of the comparative freshness and originality of the Greek genius. At any rate, the effect of the Renaissance was to accentuate the importance of Virgil. It did so largely by restoring him, both on the Continent and in the British Isles, to the place in formal education which he had occupied in the schools of ancient Rome. Petrarch, in Italy, who was in great measure the channel through which the Renaissance influence flowed into England, states in one of his *Letters to Cicero* that he had two guides: Cicero in prose and Virgil in poetry; and in England, beginning with the endowment by Cardinal Wolsey of a school at Ipswich, early in the sixteenth century, we find Virgil for poetry and Cicero for prose singled out as the primary authors to be studied in the schools—a place which they have held among the ancient classics in the curricula of Europe and America to this day. It is hardly necessary to remark, however, that Virgil had an incomparably greater place in education then than now; for whereas today he is but a single offering amid the multitude of studies which constitute our modern "what will you have?" curricula—an offering not always tempting to our boys and girls, and tasted by many of them only to have no place in their appetites of later years—he was then the master poet, to be conned and pondered and memorized in school, to be talked about and quoted and alluded to in cultivated circles, and to be the delight and inspiration of men of letters—in a word, the poet whom not to know was to be an uneducated person.

The century which gave Virgil a place of honor in the schools inspired the first translations of the *Aeneid* into English. Of special interest among these is the rendering into blank verse of the second and fourth books by the Earl of Surrey, who may be said to mark the beginning of modern English literature. It is significant of the kind of appeal which Virgil made at this time that Surrey should have singled out these parts of the *Aeneid* from all the rest for translation. These are the books in which Virgil is at his best as a dramatic story teller, the second book, containing the account of the fall of Troy—the tragic fate of Priam, Hecuba and the rest—and the fourth, recounting the romantic episode of Dido. It was these parts of the *Aeneid* which appealed most strongly to the Elizabethan dramatists, especially the Dido story, which was a favorite theme on

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the stage of the period. Shakespeare alone among the playwrights of the century shows little trace of Virgil's influence, though the lines in *The Merchant of Venice,*

> In such a night
> Stood Dido with a willow in her hand,
> Upon the wild sea-banks and waft her love
> To come again to Carthage—

bear witness to the hold of the Dido tragedy upon the imagination of the time.

But more than any man of letters of the sixteenth century, Edmund Spenser drew from the springs which the Renaissance had opened up. He combined a native poetic imagination of great sensitiveness and delicacy with a marvellously hospitable mind. He found inspiration in Greek poetry and appropriated something of its freshness and its charm. He was influenced by the Italian and French poets of the Renaissance, who themselves were followers of Virgil, and he was influenced by Virgil directly. In his *Faerie Queene* he acknowledges his indebtedness to the *Aeneid*, and his *Shepheardes Calendar* bears on the face of it the imprint of the *Eclogues*.

The same is true of the quality and range of Milton's mind and taste, in the seventeenth century. He was master of the learning which was available to his time, and receptive to the intellectual forces which were stirring in his day, above all to the classical tradition, which runs like an undertone through his life and work, softening the austerities and asperities of his Puritan associations and stimulating rather than limiting his own rare genius. It would be easy to give instances of his borrowings from Virgil and other classical authors, but Milton's real kinship with the classics is of the spirit rather than of the letter, and can be better felt than told. It is safe to say, however, that had it not been for Homer, Virgil, and Tasso, who is a close follower of Virgil, Milton could not have given us in his *Paradise Lost* the greatest epic of our language, nor could he have produced *Lycidas*, his lovely pastoral dirge, had it not been for the pastorals of Virgil and Theocritus.

After Milton, until the close of the eighteenth century—the so-called pseudo-classical period, English poetry was, generally speaking, lacking in inspiration. It was the fashion, one might say the passion, if passion were not too strong a word for this time, to be didactic, precise, and formally correct—to woo the pedestrian, not the winged muse. But Virgil was still a potent influence: he was imitated, not for his spirit, but for his formal perfection and finish. A multitude of versifiers hailed him master, but none was kindled by his divine fire. The greatest names are John Dryden, James Thomson, and Alexander Pope. Dryden made a translation of the *Aeneid* into verse, which is still an English classic. Thomson, in his *Seasons*, gives us, in spite of his artificiality, much genuine love of the English countryside after the manner of Virgil's *Georgics*. Pope thought the *Eclogues* "the sweetest poems in the world", and imitated them freely in his youthful *Pastorals*. Pope was only one of many at this time to court Virgil's pastoral muse. In fact, everybody did who wrote verses at all, and the English hills and dales were thronged with rustic swains masquerading as loving children of nature, but singing in studied phrase echoed from Virgil or Theocritus, or both. Artificiality had reached its acme of absurdity.

It was, perhaps, inevitable that this smug obedience to tradition and convention should have stirred up a reaction in the opposite direction. On the continent of Europe, the teaching of Rousseau and other devotees of the cult of naturalism is but the most striking expression of a common revolt against the tyranny of custom, convention, tradition—all the artificialities of the established order—and in favor of what was alleged to be natural, unstudied and underived. Literary taste began to prefer Greek literature as a spontaneous growth and to discount the

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Roman classics as derivative and imitative. And Virgil was dismissed by certain extremists as a poet at second hand—a view which provoked the sharp retort of Voltaire that if Homer was the creator of Virgil, then surely Virgil was his masterpiece.

Something of this controversy is echoed in England in the eighteenth century and after. Boswell, in his *Life of Johnson*, refers to a debate between Dr. Johnson and Edmund Burke in which Johnson urged the superiority of Homer, while Burke, who is said to have had always "a ragged Delphin Virgil not far from his elbow" and to have admired the speeches in the *Aeneid* as models of the highest oratory, took up the cudgels on the side of the Roman poet. However, Dr. Johnson, who read a book of the *Aeneid* each day for his refreshment, could not have been an extreme partizan, especially since on another page of Boswell he deprecates such comparisons as unreasonable and unprofitable.

As indeed they are. No work of art is in any absolute sense original, unstudied or underived. Every work of art has its roots in the past; and the nobler it is the more does it embody a noble tradition. A great architect does not invent a new style, neither does he copy an ancient building. He takes a style which has been enriched by centuries of loving craftsmanship and which commands the sympathy of his own genius, and builds in it something which is the product both of an epoch and of his own day, both of many masters before him and of his own creative imagination. He is original to the extent that he puts himself into it and adapts it to his own time and place. And the same is true of the literary craft. It is in this sense that the poetry of Virgil is derived from Homer and others, just as Homer's epic is no doubt derived from the lost songs of earlier minstrels. The amusing lines of Kipling beginning "When 'Omer smote 'is bloomin' lyre" have in them, perhaps, something more than cockney wit.

The reaction which in the eighteenth century began to challenge Virgil's sovereignty in the world of letters continued in the early nineteenth. In France, and in Latin Europe generally, the judgment of Voltaire prevailed. But in Germany, beginning with the great influence of the historian Niebuhr, it was the fashion to dethrone the Roman poet. In England, writers like Carlyle were receptive to German ways of thinking. Poets and critics like Coleridge and Landor preferred the Greeks to the Romans, the *Iliad* to the *Aeneid*, the pastorals of Theocritus to the *Eclogues*, though all conceded the superiority of the *Georgics* to its Greek model, the *Works and Days* of Hesiod. And yet it remained for the nineteenth century, with its competent scholarship and discriminating criticism ranging over the whole field of comparative literature, to give Virgil his due place among the poets and to appreciate him at his true worth. If one were to compress into a few words the collective judgment of scholars and writers at the close of the century, one would say something like this: Virgil is a cultivated poet, a child of the Greek genius, but he is at the same time thoroughly Roman, and has distilled into his poetry the best that was in Roman life and character. He, better than any other, has interpreted the dreams and ideals of that Imperial Rome which during his own lifetime issued out of the chaos of fratricidal war and imposed order and peace—the *Pax Romana* —upon a bleeding world. But he is not merely the high spokesman of his own day and people; he is a sympathetic interpreter of human life without regard to time or place. Mr. John Erskine has contributed a magazine article to this twentieth centenary of Virgil's birth under the title: "Vergil, the Modern Poet". The title is appropriate. Appropriate also is a sentence in the body of the article: "If ever human society learns to be civilized without being cruel, Vergil's poem (the *Aeneid*) will be out of date". For Virgil, though by no means a poet of despair, reveals by unobtrusive word or phrase, even

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in the poem which glorifies the Roman Empire as the instrument of peace and quiet, his profound sense of the cruelty of the human struggle and his wonder at "the riddle of this painful earth". *Lachrimae rerum* is his own expression, which sums up his tender preoccupation with the pathos of human existence. Matthew Arnold speaks of "the Virgilian cry, the sense of tears in mortal things", and Cardinal Newman dwells on "his single words and phrases, his pathetic half-lines, giving utterance, as the voice of Nature herself, to that pain and weariness yet hope of better things which is the experience of her children in every time". And, finally, to quote Mr. Mackail, brilliant interpreter of Virgil, who has also translated his poems into exquisite prose, "Virgil stands out as having shown what perfect expression is, as having achieved the utmost beauty, melody and significance of which human words seem capable".

That is the deliberate judgment of the nineteenth century. Whether any future age will improve upon that verdict it is idle to speculate. Certainly the twentieth century up to now, with its infantile worship of "our Lady Lubricity", will have to grow up before it can add to it or take anything away.

It appears that at no time since his own day was the spirit of Virgil more widely diffused than in the century which discovered in him what he really was. He had lost his austere isolation as the supreme dictator in the realm of poetry and became a beloved companion in the fellowship of letters. Never was he more read and studied and translated and quoted than then, especially in Great Britain. Macaulay had him at his tongue's end, and is said to have entertained himself while walking home from the sessions of the House of Commons at two o'clock in the morning by translating Virgil from memory. The halls of Parliament rang with quotations from the *Aeneid*, which were presumably as familiar to the members as to the orators, like Peel and Gladstone, from whose lips they rolled; and it would be interesting to know how often that "august assembly which presides over the destinies of an empire on which the sun never sets", has thrilled to the words: "Forget not, O Roman, to rule with imperial sway the peoples of the earth. These be thine arts—to impose the law of peace, to spare the conquered and to quell the proud!"

To indicate how familiar was the knowledge and appreciation of Virgil at this time, one can do no better than to repeat from Miss Nitchie's *Virgil and the English Poets* a note appended by Joaquin Miller to his poem "Kit Carson's Ride", explaining where he got the spirit and movement of that poem. He had been invited, he tells us, by the Archbishop of Dublin to meet Browning and other friends. "Two of the Archbishop's daughters," he goes on to relate, "had been riding in the park. 'And did you gallop?' asked Browning of the younger beauty. 'I galloped, Joyce galloped, we galloped all three.' Then we all laughed at the happy and hearty retort, and Browning, beating the time and clang of galloping horses' feet on the table with his fingers, repeated the exact measure in Latin from Virgil. And the Archbishop laughingly took it up in Latin, where he left off. I then told Browning I had an order—it was my first—for a poem from the *Oxford Magazine*, and would like to borrow the measure and spirit of his 'Good News' for a prairie fire on the plains, driving buffalo and all other life before it into a river. 'Why not borrow from Virgil as I did?' said Browning. 'He is as rich as one of your gold mines, while I am but a poor scribe.' "

Miller does not tell us what passage of Virgil Browning and the Bishop quoted. It is doubtful whether he was familiar with it, or did borrow directly from Virgil as Browning advised. It may have been the passage containing the line: *Quadripedante putrem sonitu quatit ungula campum;* but, in any case, the story is interesting as showing not

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only the direct but the indirect influence of an ancient poet. Browning borrowed from Virgil; the "Poet of the Sierras" borrowed from Browning; and into the same picture of wild western life enter in strange fellowship Kit Carson and Virgilius Maro!

Browning owed more to the Greek poets than to Virgil, and that is true generally of other poets of the time. But Virgil holds a high place. Keats and Wordsworth translated him as a means of nurturing their own poetic faculties. William Morris made an ambitious rendering of the *Aeneid*, and others, like Shelley, by allusion or paraphrase, bear witness to his influence. But the poet of the century who of all English writers of this and other times is most akin to Virgil in his temperament and genius, and who more than any other delights to let the light of Virgil gleam through his verses, is Alfred Tennyson. Andrew Lang, in his *Letters on Literature*, wrote: "There will come no other Virgil, unless his soul, in accordance with his philosophy, is with us today, crowned with years and honours, the singer of 'Ulysses', of 'The Lotos-Eaters', of 'Tithonus and Œnone' ". In fact, Tennyson came to be regarded as the Virgil of his age; and when the people of Mantua, Virgil's birth-place, celebrated the nineteenth centenary of Virgil's death, it was Tennyson whom they invited to write an ode appropriate to the occasion. The poem *To Vergil*, which Tennyson composed in response to that request, coining line upon line and phrase upon phrase from the gold of Virgil's verse, is the most sympathetic, melodious and brilliant appreciation of the Roman poet which has ever been written; and it is hardly to be expected that a finer tribute, or one more sincere, will ever be written than that which closes with the lines:

I from out the Northern Island, sundered once
from all the human race,
I salute thee, Mantovanno, I that loved thee
since my day began,
Wielder of the stateliest measure ever moulded
by the lips of man.

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THE ENCHANTRESS OF ANATOLE FRANCE

by Princess Marthe Bibesco

One rarely encounters fairies in the wood, and it is even rarer to meet them in society. However, that is what happened to me in dining one evening at the Duchesse de Clermont-Tonnerre's, where I saw an extraordinary creature who was evidently there for no other reason than to betwitch me. When fairies become advanced in years they turn into sorceresses. It is then that they cast spells upon young women, who should beware of them.

My fairy was old, but one could very well see that she had been a fairy indeed. Under her thick gray hair, the fire in her eyes and the mobility of her features disclosed her powers. When we were introduced, I did not hear her name. Once we were at dinner, I could not ask it, for only our host separated us, and I should have been ashamed to let it appear that I did not know who she was, as she knew all about me.

We were scarcely seated when she addressed herself to me over the Amphitryon's head and, fluttering and stirring, she told me in detail, like the supernatural person she was, everything that I had done, and everything I was about to do—I was eighteen; I had just been to Persia and published a book of travel: she had read it. I had written a little story on Alexander the Great: she asked me to read it to her at once.

Noticing my confusion, she seemed to enjoy increasing it by her praises and excessively pretty little compliments. So much did she flutter and stir that a diamond crescent worn in her hair became unfastened and fell into her plate with a splash. A servant carried away the soup, and the emblem of Diana, duly dried, reappeared upon a platter. The moment we had left the table, I took the Count Primoli aside and asked him to tell me who the amiable unknown lady was who was so well informed of all that concerned me.

"What! You don't know her yet?" he answered. "Why, she is the celebrated Madame Arman de Caillavet, the Egeria of Anatole France!"

I crossed the room to sit by her side, and all evening I discussed the enchanter's books with his old fairy.

I will never forget the light in her eyes during this conversation, and how much my appreciation of the one she loved seemed to please her. When we were leaving, with a singular insistence and emotion, she made me promise to visit her the following Sunday. She would show me the manuscripts of "Monsieur France"; I should see them all, with all their beauties and corrected errors.

I grasped my chance. I was to be introduced into the intimacy of this great mind by this thoroughly informed woman; I should be able to read, in the very hand of the father of *Thaïs* the phrase that I will perhaps quote in dying, so does its sweetness appeal to me: "Here they are, the roses of eternal morning".

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The following Sunday I went to the fairy's house. I found her in one of those eighteenth-century drawing-rooms, such as the nineteenth conceived them: in the particular Louis XVI style of the eighties.

She was surrounded by a little court of callers whom she abandoned quite simply upon my arrival. Taking my hand, and with all the vivacity which made of her such an astonishing person, she led me into a little room lined with books. She sat me beside a center table, and there for one hour she displayed her treasures before me: they were the manuscripts of *The Red Lily*, of *The Crime of Sylvestre Bonnard, The Wicker-Work Woman, The Elm-Tree on the Mall, At the Sign of the Reine Pédauque*. There were entire pages of my beloved *Thaïs*.

"When Monsieur France wrote the tale of the little jackal, it was merely a Christmas story intended for *l'Illustration*. But when he read it to me I said: 'Monsieur France, you must keep this, and make a novel out of it'."

Her piercing voice trembled a little; I saw tears in her bright eyes.

"I am furious," she said "that he is not here to receive you, to show his manuscripts himself. Where do you think he is at the present moment, the wretch, the madman? In the Antipodes, hanging with his head down and his heels in the air, where the monkeys and the parrots are."

I had the vivid sensation that I was close to some sorrow. I knew, as did everyone, that Anatole France had gone to give a lecture tour that spring in South America. But I was unconscious that this voyage had made somebody suffer—this somebody in front of me.

Life is a strange shuffle. One accepts an invitation to dinner; whom is one going to meet? Indifferent people, gay dinner partners, or perhaps unhappy creatures who seek some distraction from their grief in the intercourse with the world. Does one ever guess beside what agony one dines? And who can tell what immediate sympathy may spring from the secret call of a concealed suffering?

As if her inherent power to bestow happiness still survived in her and guided her trembling hands, I saw the fairy withdraw from a book-shelf a copy-book bound in striped and flowered silk.

"I want you to have this," she said to me, "It is the manuscript of Monsieur France's 'Neapolitan Tale'. I have never done for anybody else what I am doing for you."

I was never to see the donor again. The day after she had robbed herself of one of the manuscripts that were the jewels of her life, the relics of the emotions she had inspired, I received a letter from her that interpreted, in its exaltation, the wild grief into which the absence of the Master had thrust this poor woman.

June the eighth.

To you to whom I know not what name to give, so much would it seem unworthy of your grace: I wish at least to tell you how insufficient and mediocre was my reception of you yesterday. Not one person there was fit to unfasten your silver sandals. This was also the opinion of the sublime Count Robert whom I saw later in the afternoon, and who learned from me the details of this gathering which so shamed me. As for myself, I was to be pitied, so much did I feel this unworthiness, this mediocrity, so much was I afflicted by the absence of the one person who would have found the charming and august words with which to describe you and honor you.

Alas! He is hanging with his head down, in the Antipodes, among the savages, the monkeys and the parrots. But I hope to bring you together some day, and what a beautiful day it will be! And I ask you again for your photograph; mine is offered as a bait, very poor bait. And thank you again for having let me know a living masterpiece.

L. Arman de Caillavet.

* * *

Newspapers throughout the world announced that year the forthcoming marriage of the great writer, Anatole France, to an actress. The engagement was made public at

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sea, on board the ship which brought them back from the Antipodes. The news was denied, then confirmed, then denied again.

In the month of August I received a second letter from the fairy, in answer to a postcard I had written to her from my Carpathian home of Posada:

Tuesday, August 17th.

It seems, charming Princess, as if those sombre Carpathian mountains guard you jealously and surround you with a magic circle. You are the flower of the deep valley, a captive, and the birds, having once seen you, will fly away to trouble souls with their singing of you, far away. Whoever has seen you can never forget you. Your image engraves itself in ineffaceable lines among the most precious treasures of memory. I hope to see you again some day not too far distant, and to surround you as you should be, by those who are most worthy to admire and to understand you.

Do not forget me—I who have done nothing to make me live in the memory of my friends—and believe in my most vivid sympathy.

L. Arman de Caillavet.

When I returned to Paris in the month of December, my first act was to inquire after her. A little letter reached me, in a handwriting all trembling, that hurt me to see:

Chateau Caillavet,
par Langoiran, Gironde,
December 27th.

As if I could have forgotten you, you who have been the luminous joy of my last springtime and whom I keep the most precious of my souvenirs! I was longing for you, I was waiting for you, and some day you will see how deep is my disgrace. For two months I have been kept away from Paris, ill. I shall not be there until the end of the week after next. Will you be there still? I dare not hope so, although desiring it with all my heart. Think of me again when you appear again, radiant and charming among us, and believe that the apparition of you fills my dreams.

L. Arman de Caillavet.

P. S. My deepest regards to the Prince.

At the same time the rumor reached me that he who had been in the Antipodes, "head down", had now returned to the feet of his old love. But to remake his conquest had vanquished her, and she died on the twelfth of January, two weeks after having written me the letter announcing her contemplated return to Paris.

At "the end of the week after next" I was present, in the church of St. Philippe-du-Roule, at the funeral of the fairy. The friend who had identified her for me on the evening such a short time ago when she and I had seen each other for the first time pointed out to me, on leaving the church, an old man who buried himself in his automobile to hide his distress from the public.

It was Anatole France.

We returned by way of the Champs Elysées, discussing this woman who had been seized by so sudden and so inexplicable a feeling of friendship for me, and how she had given me so striking a proof of it. Had I possessed the merits which she had attributed to me with so much generosity, they would have counted for little in her feeling for me. What she had liked in me was my ignorance of everything that threatened a past which I had believed still alive. A magician who knew her power diminished, she had measured the effects upon a new soul, and had seen in my eyes the rebirth of the prestige that she felt she had lost.

* * *

The war swept over these souvenirs. In 1919 I was in Paris, and one evening when Monsieur Venizelos and Monsieur Politis the Greek Minister were dining with me, we came to speak of Anatole France, who was the friend of both. I told them that I possessed one of his manuscripts, and showed it to them. I related how this good fortune had fallen upon me, and how much I congratulated myself for having left "A Neapolitan Tale" in a house in the Faubourg St. Honoré, when otherwise it would have suffered the

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same fate as numberless other works and would have been destroyed in Roumania during the invasion. I then learned that all the manuscripts, the brothers of the one she had given me, and which she had spread out that day in the little book-lined room, had been bequeathed by the poor fairy to the Bibliothèque Nationale, and that this bequest had discountenanced Anatole France. The legacy had evidently been made during the time he was in the Antipodes, "with the monkeys and the parrots". I asked myself if I had the right to keep, unknown to the author, this manuscript that had been given to me on the spur of the moment by a woman unhappy and beside herself. I confided my misgivings to Monsieur Politis, who suggested the most delicate and pleasant means in the world to appease my conscience. He proposed to take me to La Béchellerie, the Enchanter's home, where I would bring his manuscript in homage, and I would not keep "A Neapolitan Tale" unless he confirmed the gift.

I passed the summer of 1919 at Perros-Guirec, and the Greek Minister made an engagement for me with Anatole France toward the end of summer. We went from Brittany to Touraine, across Anjou, one beautiful day of a vanishing August, and I carried with me the precious copy-book in its dress of flowered silk.

Advised from Tours by telephone, France was at the threshhold of his door upon our arrival. Never have I seen more grace in an old man greeting a woman. He was handsome of head, having the sort of face that a beard lengthens, and the eyes closely set to the nose that one sees in certain thirteenth-century sculptures representing kings, in the porches of churches. He was tall, and no superfluous weight spoiled his figure. His voice was soft and persuasive. He was dressed in a light suit; everything about him had an indescribable air of good humor and elegant ease; he was a noble. As for his house, it reflected his person so well and everything that one could expect of a taste universally acknowledged as the finest in the world, that from the entrance hall, where a Greek marble was framed in a French setting of the time of the Revolution, it seemed that I penetrated his soul. Roses, artistically arranged in glowing bowls, scented the salon. A few people were gathered there, in the soft light of the afternoon. Anatole France took me to a seat near a window opening upon the yellowing garden.

I did not at once show him the manuscript that I carried. The conversation between my host and his friends was upon politics. They criticized the demands of Lloyd George, who at that time was scandalizing French opinion. Anatole France compared England to the center of a solar system that forbids the nebulae, her neighbors, to solidify. Then he spoke of the limited confines of the British Isles, of the small amount of wheat cultivated there, of the great number of mouths to be fed. From these conditions are born the imperious actions of the English: to grasp from without, to seize by the right of the weak:

"When you have forty men in one cave, what can they become but thieves?"

The conversation passed naturally from the *Arabian Nights* to literature. Someone having made allusion to the certain duration of his glory, France gave a malicious smile:

"Nonsense," he said, "nothing is less sure. Some prodigious reputations like that of Honoré d'Urfé, for example, or Mademoiselle de Scudéry, have not outlived their period. Dante was in eclipse for three hundred years; like everything in this world, posthumous glory is a game of hazard. . . . One does not know who lives or who dies, in immortality."

I spoke to him about his last work, *Little Pierre*, which had delighted me. It was the tale of his own childhood.

"I see that you love this poor child, Madame. That proves that you have a beautiful soul, and I am going to show you his portrait."

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He took from a tablé the miniature of a little boy of five years, dressed in a velvet suit with a lace collar; it was little Pierre. One could easily recognize in the mischievous face of the child the beautiful closely-set eyes of the old man; the face was already long, the neck long and delicate, like a girl's.

"Do you notice," he asked me, "this pretty little lace collar that I wore, and which the artist has so faithfully reproduced? Well, this collar was the cause of the greatest humiliation and the most vivid sorrow of my childhood."

He touched his coat with his finger, and said:

"Although it scarcely appears so now, when I was young I liked fine clothes very much. When my good mother had resolved to have my portrait painted by a friend of hers who was a miniaturist, she took me to a shop and chose, among many lace collars, this one, which seemed to her the prettiest of all. I wore it every day when I went for my sittings, and it gave me a feeling of most exquisite pride, thanks to which I posed very well. But after the last sitting, when the portrait was completed, my mother, who had had I do not know what mysterious understanding with the shopkeeper, returned the lace collar to him. And I never saw it again."

This man writes as one should speak, I thought, and talks as he writes. The story he had just told me appeared worthy to become the continuation of "Fontanet" and "Marie Bagration" and all the delightful pages he had written about his early youth in "The Book of my Friend" and *Little Pierre*. The Master rose, fetched from a drawer a photograph of this mendacious miniature, wrote a dedication on it, and gave it to me: "To Princess Marthe Bibesco—Little Pierre, sixty years after".

"You have given me a wonderful present," I said to him, "and this gives me courage to give one to you even more wonderful. Perhaps you will not accept it when you know its value. This copy-book is very precious to me because it comes from you through the medium of a person whom you cherished."

I removed from its box the manuscript of "A Neapolitan Tale". Anatole France took it, opening it at the first blank page, and for a long time studied the ex-libris, a flower basket bearing the interwoven initials L.A.C.

After a lengthy silence:

"I recognize," he said, "her little flower basket. . . ."

His eyes were full of tears, and he smiled at the familiar and mournful image of his friend. Had she not come to arise between us and to bring us together this day that she had said would be a beautiful day?

Anatole France placed the manuscript under his arm.

"You cannot leave without having seen all of my Béchellerie," he declared.

We made the tour of the house. He showed me his bedroom, light and rustic. One would have called it the room of a young girl towards 1802: "Old chintz, printed with figures from the Commedia dell'Arte evoked on the walls the sweet sadness of past gaieties".

Near the small Directoire bed, white set off by green, upon a beautiful chest, the altar of the French bourgeoisie, where the place of honor is reserved for family portraits, I saw daguerreotypes of Doctor and Madame Nozière, the father and mother of Anatole France. Between these two pictures, in the center of the family shrine, was placed an old photograph taken in Venice which showed the Master standing beside a woman still young—his Enchantress.

"Do you recognize her?" he asked me.

Then he went towards his inkstand, holding the manuscript that I had given back to him. He sat before his table, and traced on the first white page, with his beautiful handwriting whose capitals curl like acanthus leaves, a magnificent dedication. With all the goodness of his heart he had confirmed the gift that had been first made to me by his old friend, Madame Armand de Caillavet:

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To the Princess Marthe Bibesco:

I am happy, Madame, to see this little manuscript between your beautiful hands, and I confirm with joy the gift of a woman of high intelligence who admired you and lauded your genius and your beauty.

I am, your very humble servant,

ANATOLE FRANCE

August 31st, 1919.

From Venice, where I was staying shortly after my visit to La Béchellerie, I wrote to Monsieur France to thank him for the reception he had given me. I felt, by some shade in his manner, that he wanted to hear from me again. In reply, I received on the twelfth of September, 1919, a letter, the first words of which are like a form of abdication of the mind before sentiment:

La Béchellerie,
Saint Cyr-sur-Loire,
(Indre-et-Loire).

Madame,

Have pity for me, because I am a poor old man, and if it is possible for you, a little friendship. But know at once that I am a trifle silly, as you must discover for yourself one day or another. You possess all the treasures of the spirit, and you have what is most divine in the world: beauty. Do me the favor to tell me when you will be in Paris, and I will come to kiss your hands, piously.

ANATOLE FRANCE.

Is it not with this little bit of silliness that he confessed to a passer-by, witness of his emotion, that Anatole France was so very human?

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SPADES AND D. H. LAWRENCE

by Ruth Frisbie Moore

APPARENTLY the faith in magic formulas will never die. The words vary, the cadences change, the class that gives the credence shifts, but the belief in incantation goes steadily on. Today the common man puts little trust in the wizardry of words; he expects no miracles from "abracadabra" or "eye of newt and toe of frog". Oddly enough, it is at present the avowed *cognoscenti* who seem to be in blind thrall to words; and it is amazing indeed to observe with what primitive ardor and credulity they are now chanting, "Spades, spades, spades; 'fair is foul, and foul is fair' ".

In the days when the spade crept into the language as the symbol for frankness, the stress was laid upon the weakness of shrinking from inevitable words. But today there is a far different emphasis. The spade-worshippers have advanced into a strange super-romanticism; and if one is to be thought thoroughly knowing, the spade must be to him the holy pilgrim's staff, the magician's wand, the king's sceptre. "Outrageous grossness," John Cowper Powys tells us, "is an intellectual and spiritual thing, worthy of all noble souls."

Indeed, that any soul could be noble and yet fail to respond to outrageous grossness is vehemently denied by the less liberal wing of the spade cult. This is the group that claims as its major prophet the late D. H. Lawrence; and probably no clearer and more characteristic expression of its faith has ever been offered than the flood of protest that arose over the banning of his *Lady Chatterley's Lover*. For everything written in defence of the book seemed, in the medieval sense, an Article. Lawrence himself treated the work as an inspired utterance, and the more radical critics approached it in a religious spirit, according it the reverent treatment a true Fundamentalist offers to Jonah and Genesis. The perfect moral certitude of Lawrence and his disciples throughout this controversy vividly recalls Plato's two Sophists (instructors "in the art of eristic, or fighting with words") assuring Socrates, "The teaching of virtue is our principal occupation; and we believe that we can impart it better and quicker than any man". And when Socrates exclaims, "My God, and where did you learn that? But are you quite sure about this? The promise is so vast that a feeling of incredulity will creep in", the Sophists answer, "You may take our word, Socrates, for the fact".

The defences offered by both Lawrence and his supporters for his unrestrained use of spades have been invariably so cock-sure and so apostolic that those of us who are congenital sceptics, not stirred by evangelism in any form, have begun to suspect that Santayana was right when he said "all earnest liberals are higher snobs". Certainly they do seem to "feel that if you refuse to move in the prescribed direction you are not simply different, you are arrested and perverse. The

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savage must not remain a savage, nor the nun a nun, and China must not keep its Wall".

Never, perhaps, since the immortal utterances of Humpty Dumpty have words been treated more arbitrarily than in that ardent defence Lawrence himself offered for his use of spades—"My Skirmish with Jolly Roger". In fact, Lawrence's views upon the docility of words and their evocative power could not be more accurately summarized than in Humpty Dumpty's own language; even the temper is the same. " 'When *I* use a word,' Humpty Dumpty said in rather a scornful tone, 'it means just what I choose it to mean —neither more nor less.' " And when poor Alice, speaking for many of us, doubts whether words can be treated so summarily, Humpty Dumpty, with infinite assurance, replies, "The question is, which is to be master —that's all. . . . They've a temper, some of them. However, *I* can manage the whole lot of them".

Alice, it will be remembered, was not thoroughly convinced by this; but most of the literary critics apparently accepted Lawrence's self-defence, without question or analysis, as a sacred *ipse dixit*. And yet to the reader not eaten up by zeal for the spade-cult it seems a peculiarly inadequate document, somewhat peevish, intensely opinionated, and thoroughly evangelistic. It would take some thinking to reconcile it with the earlier statement of Lawrence that while "the artist usually sets out to 'point a moral and adorn a tale', the tale, however, points the other way, as a rule. Two blankly opposing morals, the artist's and the tale's. Never trust the artist. Trust the tale".

The "Skirmish", in truth, offers a curious argument, stressing passionately at one moment the impotence of words, and crying in the next that if they are suppressed or changed, "The book bleeds!" All of us are believed to stand in dire need of spades, and comfortingly we are assured that "the words that shock us so much at first don't shock us at all after a while", that "shortly we shall realize that we never really were shocked", and that eventually we shall "experience a sense of relief". This sounds precisely like an earnest mother inveigling her offspring into taking castor-oil.

For those of us with a devout upbringing there is a decidedly musty odor about some of Lawrence's statements. "I put forth this novel as an honest, healthy book, necessary for us today." In his particular chosen field he piously wished "men and women to be able to think fully, completely, honestly and cleanly". It is difficult to bear his grave solicitude for us. And when the critics fall under his spell, solemnly echo his gospel and are able to see in his "courageous experiment" noble "sacrifice", "righteousness" and "martyrdom", we grow as restive as if the cause were a Sunday blue law instead of eroticism. They are veritable Impuritan Fathers.

Lawrence, himself, is greatly responsible for our unregenerate state; he once urged us to meet him in quite a different spirit. We shall forever have difficulty in accepting anything offered us earnestly for our good because we shall always hear him saying; "If only people would meet in their very selves, without wanting to put some idea over one another, or some ideal. I am I. Here am I. Where are you? Ah, there you are! Now, damn the consequences, we have met".

Surely, by such admonition both Puritan and Impuritan might benefit. But it never seems to occur to the more sedulous radicals that the immoralist as well as the moralist may prove a wearisome hot gospeller. It is singular indeed that those most fervently opposed to the older forms of propagandism should forget how much practically all of us loathe being deliberately edified and enlightened even, as E. M. Forster puts it about Joyce, "in the interests of hell". With Montaigne, "we hate all sorts of tyranny, whether verbal or effectual".

And the temper of Lawrence's work certainly is tyrannical. In the "Skirmish", for

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instance, it is not enough for him to state the nobility of his purpose; he is the true evangelist and does not hesitate to tell us that if we will not by the magic of his spades be saved, we may be damned. And the damnation he sketches for us is peculiarly depressing. In his prophet's rage we become "slow-minded, half-evolved lower natures", shut out eternally from "real culture" and from that subtle "civilization" that is able "to separate the word from the deed, the thought from the act". To him we are anathema; and firmly we are thrust into the intellectual outer darkness. "People without minds may go on being shocked; but they don't matter."

This is an unfortunate manner in a gentleman seeking tolerance for himself. No doubt it would always have been fruitless to remind Lawrence that the urbane Santayana finds it "a great principle of charity in morals not to blame the fishes for their bad taste in liking to live under water". Probably, again, Lawrence would have preferred the more didactic method of Humpty Dumpty:

> "I sent a message to the fish:
> I told them, 'This is what I wish'. . . .
> I told them once, I told them twice:
> They would not listen to advice."

Evidently this has never been a peculiarly successful method. That poignant stanza where Humpty makes his final effort to get through to those recalcitrant fish seems dramatically to symbolize Lawrence's struggle for his *Lady Chatterley's Lover*:

> "And when I found the door was shut
> I tried to turn the handle, but—"

Doors do have a way of remaining shut against the arrogant dogmatist. Instinctively we oppose our "otherness" (a quality dear to Lawrence) against his "otherness"; we are resolved neither to be saved nor to be damned. And at that we are not such queer fish. Montaigne found it "equally troublesome" to his sight "to look up at a great light, and to look down into a dark abyss". Whenever Lawrence, in the true Humpty Dumpty manner, has "pulled and pushed and kicked and knocked", and uttered such spirited little cries as "the wistful, poisonous, self-sacrificial, cultured soul—how detestable!", there have always been many of us who felt impelled to remind him, through the keyhole, of his own inimitable dictum: "To be sincere is to remember that I am I, and that the other man is not me".

It is impossible to consider this strictly Puritan (or Impuritan) manner toward us without wondering how it happens that those who have noted so fully the obscenities of the classic writers should have missed so utterly their "sweet reasonableness". We are able to receive Montaigne tenderly, despite his indubitable spades, because of his graciousness toward us. "I do not hate opinions contrary to my own. . . . Nothing in argument renders our sentiment so delicate as the opinion of preëminence, and disdain of the adversary." Could any fish in Christendom hold fast the door against a gentleman who can see himself, when worsted in controversy, as "hanging cheerfully down" his ears, and pondering "there is no merchant that always gains"?

Indeed, we feel sure that Lawrence was quite too papal in depriving us utterly of our minds merely because we happened to differ with him on a matter of spades. We are willing to concede, of course, that our minds are unlike his own, that they probably are what Lamb calls "anti-Caledonian", with a few whole garments in "their intellectual wardrobe, . . . content with fragments and scattered pieces of Truth"; while Lawrence undoubtedly possessed a classic example of the mind Lamb sees in his "Caledonian"—"His Minerva is born in panoply. . . . His understanding is always at its meridian; the twilight of dubiety never falls upon him. Is he orthodox—he has no doubts. Is he infidel—he has none either".

Strangely enough the majority of Lawrence's critics also have Caledonian minds.

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Even if they are free from bias in dealing with other writers they tend to be Caledonian toward Lawrence. No doubt it is the potent magic of that spade incantation. Probably some of the converts to the spade-cult are sincere zealots; others, we suspect, are under the compulsion of what Humbert Wolfe terms the most "insidious form of artistic blackmail"—the fear of expressing themselves sincerely about creative follies lest they should be judged blind to new talent. Many of Lawrence's disciples are, of course, exceedingly modish. A few are thoroughly diverting; Epictetus knew all about them—"When a man prides himself on being able to understand and interpret the writings of Chrysippus, say to yourself: 'If Chrysippus had not written obscurely, this fellow would have had nothing to be proud of' ".

All of these attitudes seem regrettable in critics, to whom we look for more keen and balanced judgments than we ourselves feel prepared to make. Those completely "sold" to spades for any reason probably can no more accurately evaluate them than a member of the Chamber of Commerce can perceive the inherent *esprit* of his city. Perhaps it is only the anti-Caledonians, with nothing to lose, nothing to gain and nothing to justify who will be able to turn the spades over thoughtfully, weigh them, note their adaptability for purposes of cultivation and question whether, after all, for everyday use, the lighter English scuffle-hoe is not the more effective tool.

Of course any anti-Caledonian who ventures to challenge the spade-worshippers' creed must refute the rather tawdry accusation to which some of the critics stoop—that those who do not wholly respond to Lawrence evidently have not read his books. Any one who wishes to have a ponderable opinion of Lawrence's spirit and technique must certainly have read—and reread—widely in his work. And admittedly no one with any literary feeling can do so and deny his genius. In the Lawrence who was able to forget he had a charge to keep, strange gods to glorify, there was, of course, enchantment. His *Lost Girl* (who is not worth a tuppence ponderously defying tradition in England) grows indescribably lovely picking her way in the starlit Italian night up a wild mountain path behind a burdened ass and its half-witted driver to "a place called Califano". Our hearts are stirred by his men at a wedding party, "uneasy, suspended, rather bored", oppressed by "the glassy ravel of women's excited, cold laughter and running voices". Whatever we may think of his adult Tortoises, his Baby Tortoise is most intriguing, with his tail "tucked a little on one side, like a gentleman in a long-skirted coat",

> Wandering in the slow triumph of his own existence,
> Ringing the soundless bell of his presence in chaos,
> And biting the frail grass arrogantly,
> Decidedly arrogantly.

Even a "detestable, poisonous, cultured soul" could write a book recounting Lawrence's colorful charm and imagery.

None of us, then, will question that Lawrence was a genius; but many of us not under the bewitchment of spades do lament that though a genius he so often failed to function as an artist. While sincerely appreciating him at his best, we are unable to follow those of his votaries who seem to regard him as sacrosanct, who exclaim with horror when he is attacked, and insist that all the words that fell from his lips were jewels, even when they looked like toads—that his every utterance was inevitably justified as Art. Nor do ignorance and prejudice play so important a part in our judgment as his disciples would like to believe. A large number of us, no doubt, do reverence to gods not greatly unlike those of Lawrence, only less "dark" and less dominant. Many an ardent Nature-worshipper has found difficulty in following Lawrence in his interpretation of the wonder of life because too often he has seemed guilty

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of a Gargantuan pathetic fallacy, a passionate reading into Nature of the Gospel According to St. Lawrence. He has put too heavy a burden on each blade of grass and heather-bell; all that "a primrose by the river's brim" was to Lawrence, one hesitates to say.

In fact, many of us find ourselves grouped apart from his positive admirers mainly because of a constitutional inability to grovel. How much this inability must hamper us in dealing with Lawrence can easily be seen upon reading his thoroughly unbridled pious passages, where we are led into the holy-of-holies, and asked to make obeisance to his gods. Here we are undoubtedly rendered increasingly stiff-necked by the voices of the faithful endlessly intoning that Lawrence's work is "fluid", "rhapsodic", "flamingly intense", "symbolic", "rapturous", "ecstatic", "merciless and lovely", rich with "the goat-smell, the flitter of bats' wings, the glide of regal venomous reptiles", full of "cultural awareness" and "the adorableness of life". For some of us the critical atmosphere around Lawrence often gets a bit thick. We find ourselves at ease only with some such detached observer as Virginia Woolf, with her one cool but comprehensive sentence: "Mr. Lawrence, of course, has moments of greatness, but hours of something very different".

Indeed, one can scarcely read Lawrence at any length without feeling that his "moments of greatness" come too seldom. Surely it is the spell of the magic spades that enables so many of his critics to regard him as a sustained artist. Frequently to the unenchanted he seems to lack the artist's astute selectiveness. It appears incredible, for instance, that those who rank Lawrence as the greatest writer of his era could ever have read his fevered and graceless little tract on *Pornography and Obscenity*. With its crude schoolboy gloating, and its sledge-hammer moralizing, it is surely a world away from greatness; even such matter calls for a better manner. It is difficult, also, to understand the serious attitude taken by many of the critics toward Lawrence's *Studies in Classic American Literature*. One may often agree with his ideas, but it would be hard to conceive of a less artistic presentation of them. There is the feeling throughout of his having gone off half-cocked, of his having forgotten that art is long. There is far too much of the petty artifice one connects with the Sunday supplement; as when he cries of Franklin, "Oh Benjamin! Oh Binjum! You do not suck me in any longer", or interprets Whitman—

> The universe, in short, adds up to ONE.
> ONE.
> I
> Which is Walt.

And when Lawrence grows pseudo-philosophic, from the artistic standpoint things are not much better. His definition of love as "a difficult complex maintenance of individual integrity throughout the incalculable processes of interhuman polarity" is scarcely an artist's utterance. He sounds like a rustic candidate for a Ph.D.

Since Lawrence's spade-magic is able to cast a specious lustre over even his dull and trivial passages, there is no doubt about its power to stir the emotionalists, Puritan and Impuritan alike, when it becomes the dominant motif in his work. But the true anti-Caledonians, who are disinterested enough to view the spades not from a moral but from an esthetic standpoint, as English words rather than mystic runes, are inclined to question whether Lawrence actually did use them to the best advantage, and whether the defences and countercharges of the entranced critics are altogether ultimate and invulnerable.

Our questionings do not arise, as some of these critics declare, solely because, peering out of our intellectual dungeons, we cannot bear the light; we are far from asking for cold and glamorless writing. But, with Ruskin, we do like to see the intellect of genius rise with the passions, so that "the whole

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man stands in an iron glow, white hot perhaps, but still strong, and in no wise evaporating; even if he melts losing none of his weight".

Nor, much as it may sadden the disciples of Lawrence to hear it, do many of us actually find ourselves in that pristine state of innocence where we are able to receive the thrilling shock prepared for us. Those of us who have attended public schools, travelled by ferry-boat and trolley, lived now east, now west, in the hearts of great cities and on the edge of Black Bottom, are well aware that there are large groups of persons who are practically uninhibited, and are possessed of ample, accurate and effective erotic vocabularies. That such persons, however, have any indubitable advantage over the rest of us it will take more than some radical chanting to prove. Our rather varied experience has not led us inevitably to connect "minds" and highly "evolved natures" with this complete articulateness and perfect release. In fact our feeling for this limitless freedom both in life and in language is not so often "shock" as what one of the English critics, in another setting, aptly termed "acute disrelish". We are scarcely able to believe that the form of discrimination long defined as "taste" can be so readily scrapped as some of the spade-lovers seem to think. It may take centuries rather than decades to destroy the idea that the material of art is significant, to refute Santayana's belief that "there is no effect of form which an effect of material could not enhance. . . . The king's crown not of gold, and the stars not of fire, would be feeble and prosaic things".

Of course the defenders of Lawrence always protest that those who belittle spades as a material of art must be ignorant of their honorable classic history. But this is often far from being the case. We are not, it is true, rolling the classic obscenities under our tongues; for we did not discover them yesterday. All our lives, along with the legendry and science of the past, we have been accepting them as part of antiquity. Indeed, the chief difficulty we see in reviving them, indiscriminately, today lies in the failure to recognize their historic quality; they belong to their era. In any reproduction the congruous background is of supreme importance; and our material civilization tends to render the spades discrepant. Unless we can go back completely to the crude social life of camp and castle, where birth and death and practically all that lay between were public functions, the classic indecencies are bound to strike us as unpleasantly as Rhenish turrets on a city boulevard, or a Spanish hacienda on the snow-clad village street.

The utter frankness of Sigrid Undset or of Ladislas Reymont is understandable, because the one depicts a medieval and the other a contemporary state of barbarism. Some of the war books have produced such a brutal primitive atmosphere that the spades, if we must have them, are seen in a harmonious setting; (although in any setting one needs to be on guard against those fanatical spade-dervishes who cry that if a word is loathsome it is Art). But Lawrence apparently made no effort whatever to harmonize his spades and their background; to characters graciously surrounded by lawns and libraries and gardens, green hills and cathedral towers, he gave the battlefield culture. It is true that in a thoroughly civilized atmosphere an occasional distorted creature might lose all self-control; but Lawrence's custom of having his English ladies and gentlemen use almost unfailingly the basest billingsgate when under emotional stress is not convincing; he might as well picture them with rings in their noses. With all his genius he can scarcely persuade us, for instance, that a highly intelligent and attractive young Englishwoman, walking happily through the countryside with her lover (a person of some position and dignity, whom she adores) would in a fit of pique address him for pages on end with incredibly foul abuse, calling him "a scavenger dog" and "an eater of corpses".

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And this is but a mere example of Lawrence's besetting technique. Often we are inclined to demand justice for even the dark forces which Lawrence chose to interpret; repeatedly we are impelled to echo Havelock Ellis —"A religion can no more afford to degrade its Devil than to degrade its God".

The critics have lamented long and loud over how much the nineteenth-century writers were hampered by their lack of freedom to use spades. But Lawrence's undiscriminating use of them leads us to question whether the pity for more convention-bound writers has not been largely wasted. What would it have profited Elizabeth Bennet or Emma, Lily Dale or Dora Copperfield to speak like a fishwife? Imagine (if you dare) *The Return of the Native* spotted with Laurentian obscenities. And would not even *Vanity Fair* be a vastly less clever and intriguing book if it were more explicit?

It is, we grant, a high-sounding esthetic theory that we should be able wholly to disassociate words and deeds, thoughts and acts. But in view of the fact that language originated to establish these associations, it is doubtful if the number of those in the world who can literally achieve this detachment far exceeds the handful to whom Einstein grants comprehension of his theory. Especially in the field of the novel, which E. M. Forster sees as eternally "sogged with humanity", the establishment of this mode of response is peculiarly difficult. And surely the difficulty is at its height when novels deal as intimately as do those of Lawrence with the emotions that are most universal and most poignant.

Of course it is quite the fashion of the moment to imply that if the reader finds himself unpleasantly conscious of violently explicit language, he, rather than the writer, possesses a pornographic mind. But is not this a somewhat sophistical argument? If one were taken to view a garden richly varied and planted in a definite and charming scheme, but with sunflowers scattered thickly through it by a wilful gardener, could one rightly be judged inartistic if his eyes focused on the sunflowers more than on the subtle planning? The character in Plutarch who complained that he could not see the play because "it was so clouded with language" was not the last of his race.

For the leaning toward some artistic restraint, some conscious discretion in the use of words, is not found so exclusively among the Roundheads as our disparagers like to think. Through the ages, in one way or another, men of widely differing backgrounds have given evidence of the feeling. Confucius invests the use of words with cataclysmal significance. "When words are misused, affairs go wrong. When affairs go wrong, courtesy and music droop. When courtesy and music droop, law and justice fail. And when law and justice fail them, a people can move neither hand nor foot. . . . A gentleman is nowise careless of words." The classic Epictetus cries, probably with amusement, "Mortification of the sense of shame and modesty we go so far as to dub strength of mind!" Dante, in the chaste but pregnant line with which Francesca closes her recountal of the fatal reading with Paolo, illustrates with peculiar vividness the charm and power of leaving something to the imagination—"And in that book that day we read no more". Stevenson, who, perhaps, will not be too hastily dismissed now that he has been proved a perfect rake as well as a stylist, sees it as a limitation of literature that it lacks "those suppressions by which other arts obtain relief", that it has "no smoothed impasto, no inscrutable shadow as in painting, no blank wall as in architecture". Havelock Ellis, surely no Puritan, realizes that "bracing as well as relaxing is part of the soul's hygiene" and that "we cannot have freedom in any triumphant degree unless we have restraint". Repeatedly Rabindranath Tagore recognizes the inexpressible. "Beauty knows to say 'Enough', barbarism clamors for still more." "In the shady depth of life are the lonely nests of memories that shrink from words."

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And, curiously enough, the argument so persistently offered by the upholders of spades, that the English language has long stood in desperate need of an exceedingly specific erotic vocabulary such as the French possess, meets its most effective challenger in the French critic, Taine. And such is the nature of his challenge that it is practically dateless; all moderns who are sceptical about the advantages of standardizing literatures or *mores* will find Taine voicing their ideas. It will be remembered that he felt very strongly against mongrel literatures; that he saw the points of the Englishman as differing from those of the Frenchman; that he regarded the writers of each nation as at their best when thoroughbred. For to him every national literature was an inevitable outgrowth of what Lawrence himself has characterized as a "great reality—the spirit of place". Taine felt that the English failed signally when they tried to ape the volatile French. While admitting that he would trust the Englishman more readily with his wife or his purse, in a literary crisis his faith was with the Frenchman. For he considered it possible to "break the glittering ice that covers" the Frenchman without revealing anything so dark and turbulent as "the swollen and muddy torrent that roars beneath his neighbor".

Indeed, it may have been a sure artistic instinct that made the English withstand the evangelism of D. H. Lawrence. Perhaps they were merely demonstrating the truth of his own statement that "different places on the face of the earth have different vital effluence", merely defending, intuitively, their literary "otherness". For nothing responds more quickly to the genuine needs of any people than their language; almost overnight a new science or industry can develop a completely fresh vocabulary-group, and render it familiar to the masses.

It will not surprise us if the spade-lovers, from the seat of the scornful, dismiss us very lightly; for we have not forgotten that the Gryphon and the Mock Turtle pronounced Alice an utter simpleton because she had not studied "Uglification". No doubt we may be told that only those incapable of appreciating Lawrence are thrown into a state of perturbation by his spades. But this would be scarcely fair; for frequently his aiders and abettors get into a great mental flurry over them. One of Lawrence's most ardent American defenders closes a highly eulogistic essay with the words, "Mr. Lawrence can pass with equal sureness from colliery to cathedral, and find the right word for every thing and person met on the way, the right word, though often a perplexed and perplexing word". Humpty Dumpty must indeed be the patron saint of the Laurentians; nothing less than one of his "portmanteau words" could possibly be all at the same time precisely "right", "perplexed" and "perplexing". Perhaps in dealing with Lawrence and his adherents we should always keep in mind the keynote of Humpty's gospel: "Impenetrability! That's what *I* say".

Humpty Dumpty had a genius for dramatic last words. But anti-Caledonians cannot say last words; Lamb allows them only "surmises, guesses, misgivings, partial illuminations", views of no more than "a feature or side-face of Truth". And so no one of them would pretend to say anything final concerning spades. But since Lawrence's Caledonian mind had no hesitancy about uttering finalities we may let him say our last words for us. They are words that his disciples seem to have forgotten; but they fit in rather neatly with all this turmoil over the use of spades. "The most unfree souls go west and shout of freedom. Men are freest when they are most unconscious of freedom. The shout is a rattling of chains; always was."

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THE HISTORY OF THEIR BOOKS

XIV. ALBERT PAYSON TERHUNE

by Arthur Bartlett Maurice

From one angle Albert Payson Terhune is an excellent example of the writing man under the yoke of popular demand; for the writing man and the writing woman, like the people of the stage, are subject to the moral of the old lines that "those who live to please must please to live". When Mr. Terhune's heart was most set upon writing stories about dogs, his study, companions and friends for many years, the editors and the publishers discouraged him; when a time came when he wanted to write about something else, the same editors and publishers listened in polite boredom to his suggestions, and then with genuine interest urged the writing of more dog stories.

Today Albert Payson Terhune's four-legged heroes and heroines, Lad, Bruce, Wolf, Buff, Lochinvar Luck, Treve, Nell, Cleo and the rest, challenge in popularity any heroes and heroines of contemporary American fiction. Their exploits and their heart appeal bring to Mr. Terhune letters that average two hundred and forty a week. These letters are not only from all parts of the United States, but from all over the world. To the Place of the stories, on the shore of a lake in northern New Jersey and overlooking the Ramapo Hills, sentimental women make pilgrimages carrying bunches of roses to place upon the grave of some particularly loved hero. Nor are women and children the only visitors. One day a general of the United States Army, standing before one of the graves, bared his head. "But," said Mr. Terhune, "after all, he was only a dog." "Sir," said the officer in rebuke, "he was a brave soldier."

Yet to write about these dogs at all required the courage of a collie and the obstinacy of a man. For ten years Mr. Terhune's efforts met with continual rebuff. The friendliest and most sympathetic editors ignored his suggestions and returned submitted tales unread with the comment that nobody wanted to read a dog story. Finally a story or two about Lad trickled through. Others followed. When enough had appeared in the magazines Mr. Terhune determined that there should be a book. He outlined it to a friend holding an important position in the publishing house to which his next book had been promised. "Don't send it to me," said the friend. "I don't want to be in the certain position of having to reject it. Rather than that we will release you from your agreement."

Mr. Terhune had an idea. There was a publisher of Scotch ancestry and proclivities. Mr. Terhune reasoned: "The book is about a Scotch collie. It should stir him like the scent of the heather or the skirl of the bagpipes. I'll try it on him, not as a publisher but as a Scotchman." In time he was asked to call. He did so, expecting to have the manuscript handed back to him. The publisher said:

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"This book will not sell. But sometimes we publish a book that we know will not sell. I like the book. The dog is Scotch and so am I. I'll bring it out in a limited edition". Within a few weeks after publication he wrote: "Lad's on the rampage. We can't stop him." That was ten years ago. *Lad: A Dog* has never appeared as a reprint. In its original form it has gone through numerous editions and to this day it averages a sale of something like seven thousand copies a year.

That was the beginning that led to the writing of *My Friend the Dog, Wolf, Bruce, The Heart of a Dog, Treve, His Dog, Lochinvar Luck, Further Adventures of Lad, Buff: A Collie,* and *Gray Dawn*; to the creation of an entire little dog world; and of a canine family history analagous to the human history of Zola's Rougon-Macquart family of the Second Empire. Like human families, dog families sometimes become extinct. There are today hundreds of dog owners in the land who claim for their pets the blood of Sunnybank Lad. Wolf was the son of Lad. But with the death of Wolf the line of Lad ended.

Treve's blind mate, Nell, was actually Treve's own blind daughter Sunnybank Fair Ellen. Lochinvar Luck was really Lochinvar Bobby. Buff was a combination of two dogs both called Rex, one of them belonging to the Place, and the other a chance acquaintance that became a close friend in the course of a stay in the Adirondacks. Treve was Sunnybank Sigurd. Gray Dawn was Bruce's son Sunnybank Gray Dawn, and Bruce in turn was Sunnybank Goldsmith. In a war fought to make the world "safe for Democracy" Bruce, incidentally, played a part in making it also safe for dogs. The scheme of food conservation urged that dogs be regarded as parasites, and generally exterminated as such. In rebuttal Mr. Terhune wrote a series of stories based upon Bruce's own patriotic exploits garnished with tales obtained from British officers, of services rendered by collies in the war zone.

Not usually but invariably, Mr. Terhune's stories have been based upon well authenticated fact. For example, there is in the history of Buff a chapter called "The Strangest Dog Story I Know". The suggestion for that came from a four-line newspaper item. It told of a dog sent from its home in Fort Scott, Kansas, crated and in a baggage car, to Albuquerque, New Mexico, a distance of nine hundred and fifty-six miles. There it disappeared almost immediately. Eight months later, bearing the scars of bloody battle, it limped into its old home at Fort Scott. The conditions, the appearance of the dog and the time elapsed, told the story of the homeward trail by scent alone, of long delays and of encounters with ravenous wolves. Before putting a line to paper Mr. Terhune verified the tale by a score of affidavits. The chapter in *Gray Dawn* called "The Non-Sacred Elephant" was almost a literal description of the behavior of the original of the hero when accompanying the Mistress on a shopping excursion from the Place to the neighboring village. Mr. Terhune has told one story that might have been called "The Dog That Made Good", the tale of the collie that, regarded as an idiot in its puppyhood, eventually won through to a greatness worthy of his ancestry. The real dog, regarded as mentally hopeless, was sold from a New Jersey kennel, not Sunnybank, and shipped to Toronto. There it escaped and as a result of ten savage months in the woods acquired intelligence, resource and courage.

Living much in the companionship of dogs and writing about them, Mr. Terhune has developed some odd theories about dogs, and some decided convictions as to the great dog stories of the world. For example, he is outspoken in his admiration for Alfred Ollivant's *Bob; Son of Battle*, both as a story and a dog story. In that tale if never again, Mr. Ollivant showed an astonishing knowledge of dogs and dog psychology. Mr. Terhune also holds in high esteem Jack London's *The Call*

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of the Wild. On the other hand, while acclaiming Richard Harding Davis's *The Bar Sinister* as a fine story, he maintains that it is not a dog story at all. No accident of canine *mésalliance* like the Wyndham Kid would ever have taken the Blue Ribbon away from his thoroughbred sire; and no dog would remember the long-lost mother of his puppyhood.

A curious theory that Mr. Terhune has developed, but with which he is not yet entirely satisfied is that the dog's ear is deaf to consonants but acutely sensitive to vowels. At Sunnybank the puppies are rarely named, the idea being that the right of naming belongs to the eventual owner. A very young puppy is known as "Baby", and later as "Boy" or "Girl". Later on temporary names are adopted. A dog that has learned that it is meant by the word "Daisy" will pay no attention to the word "Dizzy", but will instantly respond to the call of "Baby". It recognizes the vowel sound at once.

Strange as some of these tales of the dog world are, the strangest and most uncanny of them all has yet to be told. It is an eerie dog ghost story that calls for attestation. One visitor to Sunnybank concerned in it was the late Henry Healy, vice-president of the Central Leather Company. Another is the Reverend Mr. Appleton Grannan, rector of St. Anne's Church of Lowell, Massachusetts. Of all the dogs that have surrounded the Master, none other ever showed him such adoration as Rex. For hours at a time he would lie at the Master's feet with upraised eyes of worship. Not permitted to enter the house during the dinner hour, Rex would take his place at a window through which he could gaze at the Master's back.

The day came when as a result of a terrible battle Rex had to be eased out of life and buried in a corner of the Place. A year later the Reverend Mr. Grannan was a guest of the house. He had never known Rex. At dinner that night he seemed abstracted. He explained that he had been watching the dog that had been peering through the window at the host's back. "But there's no dog there," said Mr. Terhune. The visitor insisted that there had been, and when asked what kind of a dog gave a detailed description of Rex, including a scar on the forehead that the dog had acquired late in life.

A year later, a night of March 1918, Mr. Healy, who had known Rex, was Mr. Terhune's dinner guest. At the end of the repast he said: "Do you know I have never seen anything like the devotion in the eyes of the dog that has been lying at your feet through dinner." "What dog?" asked Mr. Terhune. "Why, your dog Rex." "Good heavens, man," said Mr. Terhune, "do you realize that Rex has been dead for two years?" The visitor shook his head. "Rex has been lying at your feet throughout the entire meal."

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DORIS ULMANN: PHOTOGRAPHER-IN-WAITING

by Dale Warren

THE LEGEND "Photograph by Doris Ulmann" is one which carries with it vastly more than the literal significance of the four words as they meet your eye. The uninitiated who reads this credit line beneath the reproduction of a picture of Carl Van Vechten or Joseph Hergesheimer, if he stops to think of it at all, may recall the horrors of some commercial studio in which he underwent the heartless and standardized ordeal known as "having one's picture taken". He may reconstruct a mental picture of a "studio", flaunting four depressing gray walls and a solitary skylight or north window out of which none but a giraffe could peer. His ears may even be assailed by the customary shifting of screens, chairs and tripods, not to mention the well-known jargon of the "operator" whose exhortations easily shame the most practiced radio announcer.

But Doris Ulmann belongs to no Commercial Photographers' Union nor does she subscribe to anything so unimaginative as an eight-hour day. When an unknown voice crassly demands over the telephone an appointment for a sitting—preferably one that will not last over half an hour—her soft-voiced Thekla politely announces that Mrs. Ulmann has suddenly left for Europe, and when a galaxy of particularly interesting faces is safely impressed upon a hundred or more of her glass slides she will frequently jump into a smock and not stir outside of the house for three days in a row.

Sequestered high above Park Avenue, Doris Ulmann lives and works in an apartment that would be the despair of any interior decorator who by some grave mistake might be admitted. Here the "sitter" wanders leisurely about among an army of chairs and couches upholstered in claret red, gazes longingly at Oriental bronzes and wistful madonnas, and drops at length onto some inviting cushion to open an autographed Robert Frost or Edna Millay. The well-trained Clara emerges at length with a tray of sandwiches, tea or cocktails, according to the hour and season, and the work begins in earnest. There is an old pewter bowl generously filled with Benson and Hedges, Pall Malls, English Ovals, Luckies and Chesterfields, for no visitor, not even Isabel Paterson, is forced to bring, smoke, or roll his own.

Four large windows, admitting all the light that is necessary, open above the Church of St. Ignatius, whence frequently issue strains of organ music so seductive as to charm away the furrowed lines of care from the brow of a Powys or a Mencken. Once an ill-timed rendition of the *Lohengrin* Wedding March so embarrassed a writer of books-the-kind-that-are-suppressed-in-Boston that the sitting had to be postponed until the next morning, and the pictures came out badly at that.

One who sits for Mrs. Ulmann does not "sit" in the usual sense of the word. There is no mechanical apparatus behind your neck

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JOSEPH HERGESHEIMER

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to hold your head in the most unnatural and uncomfortable position possible, no "see the monkey", no "now smile a little, please; there, that's better". You select your own chair, move it up to the window, and then assume the position that you enjoy above all others, with or without pipe, cigarette, ukulele, or volume of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, according to the state of your own desire, or according to the position in the heavens of the planet Saturn, if you happen to be tainted with a mystical turn of mind. You continue to smoke, play, read, or ponder silently on your sins, and with never so much as a click of a shutter the likeness of all that is mortal of you is for all time preserved. If you should be led to think that the tea and the cocktails and the cigarettes and the conversation are merely dispensed for your enjoyment you will be all wrong. Mrs. Ulmann would say that these things are offered to "draw you out". She studies your hands as you pass her a plate of cakes, observes which leg you cross over the other, notices the expression of your eyes, tells you a funny story to make you laugh, and another not so funny to see if you are easily reduced to tears. If, by any caprice of the gods, the two sides of our face fail to match she can tell you in a second which one you should present to the world.

Of course you are not afraid to look at the camera (when a full face is wanted) because if you were you would not be having your picture taken, but to prevent your assuming an icy stare and twisting your mouth beyond all recognition, she will ask you a thousand and one questions and insist upon more than monosyllabic answers. Then, as a foil to possible boredom, she will regale you with anecdotes. She will tell you of a trip to Northampton where she was left standing on the dreariest of front porches while Calvin Coolidge was finishing his lunch, of an experience in Washington where "Hell-and-Maria" Dawes permitted but one exposure and talked to her only through an interpreter as if she spoke a foreign tongue, of a Lucullan feast at the Dower House with Hergesheimer and Emily Clarke.

A perplexing situation arose when E. V. Lucas came for his portrait. It was arranged that his pictures should show him at work. Mrs. Ulmann had, therefore, procured a large pad of paper and placed a table in front of the chair in which he was to sit. Expecting Mr. Lucas to take a pencil out of his pocket, she was surprised to hear him ask for pen and ink. Having nothing but the fountain pen she used for writing letters, she made her apology. Oh, it wouldn't do at all, she was told. Must have pen and ink—else the picture would not show him in a natural pose. Thekla was summoned and then Clara, and from one came an old-fashioned penholder and from the other a bottle of watery writing-fluid, thus averting one of life's major catastrophies. With Robert Frost a similar predicament raised its hoary head. He was also to be taken at work, and paper and pencil were provided. No calls for ink this time, but a polite request for an old board to lay across his knees, as he scarcely knew how to write at a table. Here was a puzzler, as discarded planks did not grow on every hatrack on Park Avenue. The seamstress this time stepped into the breach, and with a pin-scarred lapboard hiding his baggy knees the author of *North of Boston* appeared to be safely hidden somewhere in the New Hampshire hills.

Through Lucas came an introduction to Galsworthy, who was passing through New York on his way to England from Arizona. Insisting that a good picture was really only a matter of chance, he nevertheless accepted Mrs. Ulmann's invitation one cold winter morning. Not knowing exactly when he would arrive, she was ensconced in the fastnesses of her dark room when he was announced. Asking who it was that had rung, she was offered the following description of the creator of the Forsytes: "He did not say his name. He is somebody who speaks Eng-

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lish with a very funny accent". Mrs. Ulmann's own version is probably somewhat more accurate. "Mr. Galsworthy was only with me for a very short time," she says, "but was less elusive than most of the authors I have taken. If his pictures are as successful as general opinion claims them to be, he is responsible, not I. His poise and simplicity were charming."

Thornton Wilder blew in from Lawrenceville one morning when Mrs. Ulmann was hardly out of bed. He thought he was late and was visibly excited. "Of course I asked him to take off his glasses," says Mrs. Ulmann, "and then I had to wait until his eyes focused. It was the same way with Oliver La Farge. When people wear glasses I always take a few pictures in which they are wearing them, but I don't like them at all, because they make every one look alike. If you wear tortoise-shell glasses you might as well be content to look like an owl and to have everyone you meet on the street hoot at you unblushingly." After the first half hour, Wilder decided to cancel the rest of his morning's engagements. "I rather like this now," he said. "We might go on all the afternoon if you have nothing else to do."

Vincent Sheean is another young author who rushed in somewhat flustered, although obviously prepared. After the first half-dozen pictures, he exclaimed: "But you know my hair is not always as neat as this. It is generally all mussed up and I run my fingers through it, like this". He illustrated. Mrs. Ulmann does not say whether or not she destroyed the set of plates she had already made but I know that she proceeded at such length that Mr. Sheean begrudged the extra half-hour spent with brush and comb that morning.

Revealing the reverse of the medal of human vanity, a well-known editor whose office is somewhere on Madison Avenue asked for a mirror when he had scarcely taken off his coat. An early American antique, bought in Virginia a short time before, was quickly unhooked from the door of the coat closet in the hall and placed where he could refer to it at intervals of five minutes throughout the afternoon. The same gentleman appeared with a bag as if to spend the week-end, and the most fastidious of Mrs. Ulmann's sitters become quite familiar with her private apartments, in which one may discreetly change from one costume to another. Not infrequently do they leave behind them neckties, waistcoats, trousers even, all of which are returned the next morning by George, her long-suffering chauffeur. Irving Fineman, winner of the Longmans Green contest, appeared one rainy day in a slouch hat and rain-coat. His appearance so intrigued Mrs. Ulmann that he was first taken in this combination before changing to his habitual black sweater and well-worn white ducks. "I want to take you in the clothes you generally work in," said Mrs. Ulmann, to receive Fineman's reply: "That would be in a state of almost complete undress".

S. S. Van Dine arrived one day, preceded by his Mephistophelian beard, and Mrs. Ulmann considers his pictures among the best she has ever taken. Among other pilgrims was Edward Arlington Robinson, who made the fatal mistake of coming the wrong day. Vilhjalmur Stefansson apologized for his appearance, saying that he had been up until three that morning, and Carl Van Vechten walked in with an ulcerated tooth, although to look at his picture as he clutches an early copy of *Parties* you would have difficulty in determining whether it was a right upper or left lower molar. Julia Peterkin never thinks of sleeping in New York and used this as an excuse for dropping immediately onto a davenport and closing her eyes. "If you want a good picture, give me a cocktail," she muttered, and then sprang up with such a succession of scintillating stories that the ice melted in the shaker and the pictures were finished before anyone detected its prophetic presence. Llewelyn Powys, after walking

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S. S. VAN DINE

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WALDO FRANK

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ESTHER FORBES

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most of the way in homespun that was none too well padded, hurried to the window and basked in the warmth of a midwinter sun. "How could I have taken him," asks Mrs. Ulmann, "except warming his hands in the sunshine? I am sure that he is not at home in the shadow." Authors may come and authors may go but Llewelyn is a permanent guest at Mrs. Ulmann's, although it is not always of Mr. Powys that she speaks when referring to Llewelyn. Half the time it is of the immaculate white polar bear that adorns her living-room floor, so named soon after Llewelyn Powys's visit. An affection grew up between them while the portraits were being made, and now Mrs. Ulmann cannot look at one without thinking of the other.

When literary faces all begin to look alike and invitations to literary teas tread upon one another's heels, Mrs. Ulmann decides it is time to get away. She gets into her car, gives George a road map and sets out—always at midnight—for South Carolina, Kentucky, or New England, but never without her photographic paraphernalia in the tonneau and a set of well-defined plans in her head. Some of the most interesting pictures she has ever taken are those of Kentucky mountaineers and Gullah Negroes. With Julia Peterkin for guide and company, she recently took a long trip through the South, studying the old Negro rituals—baptism, feet-washing, praying, "shouting", cotton-picking. I remember her telling of one black sister Nancy, who was cajoled into posing by Mrs. Peterkin's sweet-talk. When Nancy pursed her lips and assumed the rigid stare she thought suited to the occasion, Mrs. Ulmann told her that it would be quite all right for her to talk and move her head slightly if she was uncomfortable. Nancy, however, had ideas of her own. "No," she answered. "I will not talk and I will not move. Something tells me to be quiet. This is God's work."

Ellen Glasgow is one who evidently does not share Nancy's opinion of Mrs. Ulmann's calling or technique. When she received her set of pictures, she telegraphed bidding Mrs. Ulmann destroy the plates. The next day she sent a special delivery letter explaining that she had immediately consulted a doctor to find out what possibly could be the matter with her. Again the exhortation to destroy the plates was repeated. In the course of her Southern trip, Mrs. Ulmann made a number of portraits of authors in their own homes, James Boyd and Struthers Burt at Southern Pines, Paul Green at Chapel Hill, Sherwood Anderson at Troutdale, Virginia, and Hergesheimer at West Chester.

"That was a great day with Anderson," she says. "I arrived at ten o'clock in the morning and did not leave until after midnight. Certainly no photographer could ask for a more interesting subject than Mr. Anderson, nor could anyone have put himself more completely in my power. He even led me to his clothes closet and asked me to look over his suits and choose the one I wanted him to wear. With Mr. Hergesheimer I also felt delightfully at ease, and Irita Van Doren went so far as to say that my pictures were good because they were the only ones she had seen that did not make him look exactly like Carl. I had dined with Mr. Hergesheimer the night before and, when he was carving, noticed that he let his glasses dangle gracefully from one ear. That gave me a good idea for an informal portrait, and that is the way we began the next morning in his studio. I took one showing him with a glass of beer in his hand, and there wasn't tea in the glass either!"

I venture to say that Mrs. Ulmann never put in a more strenuous week than the last seven days of July in and about Boston. Margaret Ayer Barnes was photographed in Mattapoisett in the midst of reading notices of her new novel, *Years of Grace*. Beneath fair skies, Buzzards' Bay stretched out an inviting hand, and waiting at the dock was "The Broadway Limited", the new motor-

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OLIVER LA FARGE

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BLAIR NILES

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boat, so christened by three young Barneses when their mother selected it as a good investment for the proceeds from her play, *Dishonored Lady*. But Mrs. Ulmann stuck to terra firma and worked overtime before driving to Lakeville to wait upon Hamilton and Jeannette Gibbs. Major Gibbs was comfortably dressed in white knickers and a shirt open at the neck, but his wife would have none of such a costume. A necktie was essential, she said, as she produced one from a nail on the wall and offered to tie it herself if necessary. Major Gibbs is the only one of Mrs. Ulmann's sitters who has charmed her with the rich tones of an accordion while she was occupied in changing her slides, and the Gibbses are the first pair of writers she has ever taken over a game of chess.

Mary Lee posed in her garden in Chestnut Hill, but most of the sitting was taken up in running to shelter between thunder showers. Sophia Cleugh and Gamaliel Bradford were both taken in Wellesley. Mr. Bradford reclined first in a swinging hammock on the piazza and then went indoors to assume his habitual position. This consisted of sitting upright on his bed and pulling up over his knees the wheeled stand that supports his typewriter and other working materials. Although the Bradford home is richer in well-used volumes than many Public Libraries, and the interior is compact in the old New England tradition, Mrs. Ulmann handled her imposing equipment in a manner that would have excited the envy of the most accomplished circus juggler, and succeeded in producing the most realistic photographs of Mr. Bradford I have ever seen.

John Livingston Lowes came up from Scituate and was taken in the office of his publishers. Esther Forbes stopped work on her new novel and gave the weeds in her garden an afternoon holiday.

On one occasion Mrs. Ulmann took H. M. Tomlinson in his room at the Brevoort, meanwhile cursing the vibration caused by underground subways and a neighborly riveting machine. To Princeton she journeyed to take Henry Van Dyke at Avalon, and to Englewood for Anne Parrish. Edna Millay was taken at her farm in Austerlitz. At Blair Niles's apartment in Turtle Bay Gardens she had to move so much of the furniture that Mr. Niles thought he had walked in at the wrong door when he caught them at work.

Outside of literature, Mrs. Ulmann has studied Sarajine Naidu, Sava Botzaris, Mei Lan-fang, Angna Enters, Helen Keller, and many prominent figures in public life. Some years ago she did a book of portraits of the Medical Faculty of Johns Hopkins University, and this led indirectly to her *American Editors*, originally suggested by Louis Shipman who was then editor of *Life*. The illustrations were reproduced in photogravure and the composition was by Frederick Goudy. To supplement his portrait, each of the editors included contributed a brief *apologia pro vita sua*, and the collection stands as unique of its kind. Her publishing plans for the future include a book of pictorial studies of Negroes taken in the South.

"The faces of the men and women in the street," Mrs. Ulmann told me, "are probably just as interesting as literary faces, but my particular human angle leads me to the men and women who write. I am not interested exclusively in literary faces, because I have been more deeply moved by some of my mountaineers than by any literary person, distinguished as he may be. A face that has the marks of having lived intensely, that expresses some phase of life, some dominant quality or intellectual power, constitutes for me an interesting face. For this reason, the face of an older person, perhaps not beautiful in the strictest sense, is usually more appealing than the face of a younger person who has scarcely been touched by life.

Mrs. Ulmann has often been asked why no actors are included in her gallery. By way of answer she maintains that theatrical peo-

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CARL VAN VECHTEN

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MARGARET AYER BARNES

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ple, for the most part, do not wish character to show in their faces and that she is not interested in what is merely an attractive photograph. She would also rather study men than women: "Men are usually less self-conscious and women often have preconceived notions of how they want to look. However, if a man is self-conscious he is a hundred times worse than the most self-conscious woman. Whenever I am working on a portrait, I try to know the individuality or real character of my sitter and, by understanding him, succeed in making him think of the things that are of vital interest to him. My best pictures are always taken when I succeed in establishing a bond of sympathy with my sitter. When there is the slightest suggestion of antagonism, then my best efforts are of no avail".

A delicately turned and sincerely expressed compliment means more to her than an invitation to dinner and the theatre, and her correspondence files contain letters that she would not part with for a large share of Manhattan Island. "If there is any deficiency in the portraits, it is in the subject and not in the artist," is the verdict of Gamaliel Bradford. "The portraits are the history of my life," wrote Waldo Frank. "They are 'me' and something else which is 'you'." "I always wanted to look like that. How did you do it?" asked Carl Van Vechten. Said Sherwood Anderson at the end of that memorable day in Virginia: "I feel as if you are taking a part of me away with you".

Born and educated in the city of New York, Doris Ulmann studied to be a teacher and specialized in psychology. For a term she went to law school but gave it up because she felt that the human element was obscured beneath a welter of legal technicalities. Photography was undertaken at first as a hobby and as an excuse for doing something with her hands when her mind was tired. She took a course with Clarence White at Teachers' College and later taught at his school. Those were the almost forgotten days before it was a Chinese puzzle to fit in appointments and still have time for the severe mechanical routine imposed by developing and printing.

Like the secrets of the early Venetian glass workers at Murano, Mrs. Ulmann jealously guards the magic combination which gives to her finished portraits a richness and depth not found elsewhere. In a dark room which was once a bathroom, and still can be distinguished as such, she bends night after night over a basin as miraculous as the witches' caldron in Macbeth. No other hand but hers touches the portrait until it is ready for public view. Her reason for not showing proofs is because she uses them as the working basis for her prints. "I see my finished print in the proof," she says, "but I cannot expect others to see anything beyond what the proof presents. I avoid retouching, but prints always require spotting before they are ready. I believe that I become better acquainted with my sitter while working at the pictures, because the various steps provide ample time for the most minute inspection and contemplation. Sometimes I wonder about thought transference. If it exists, my patients must sense my preoccupation when I think intensely of them while working on their portraits."

Note the word "portraits". It is Mrs. Ulmann's own term, and whenever I have said "pictures" I should have said "portraits", because there is a vast difference. Surely no painter ever took up palette or brush with a gesture more completely dedicated to art than that with which Doris Ulmann confidently throws a black square of broadcloth over her hair. And her ambition is conceived on a scale no less lofty. If Harry Salpeter is "the Boswell of New York", then Doris Ulmann is its Romney, or Reynolds, and her gallery of portraits includes representations no less accurate and revealing than the canvases left by the great court painters.

When you open a large flat package mailed you by Mrs. Ulmann you find some

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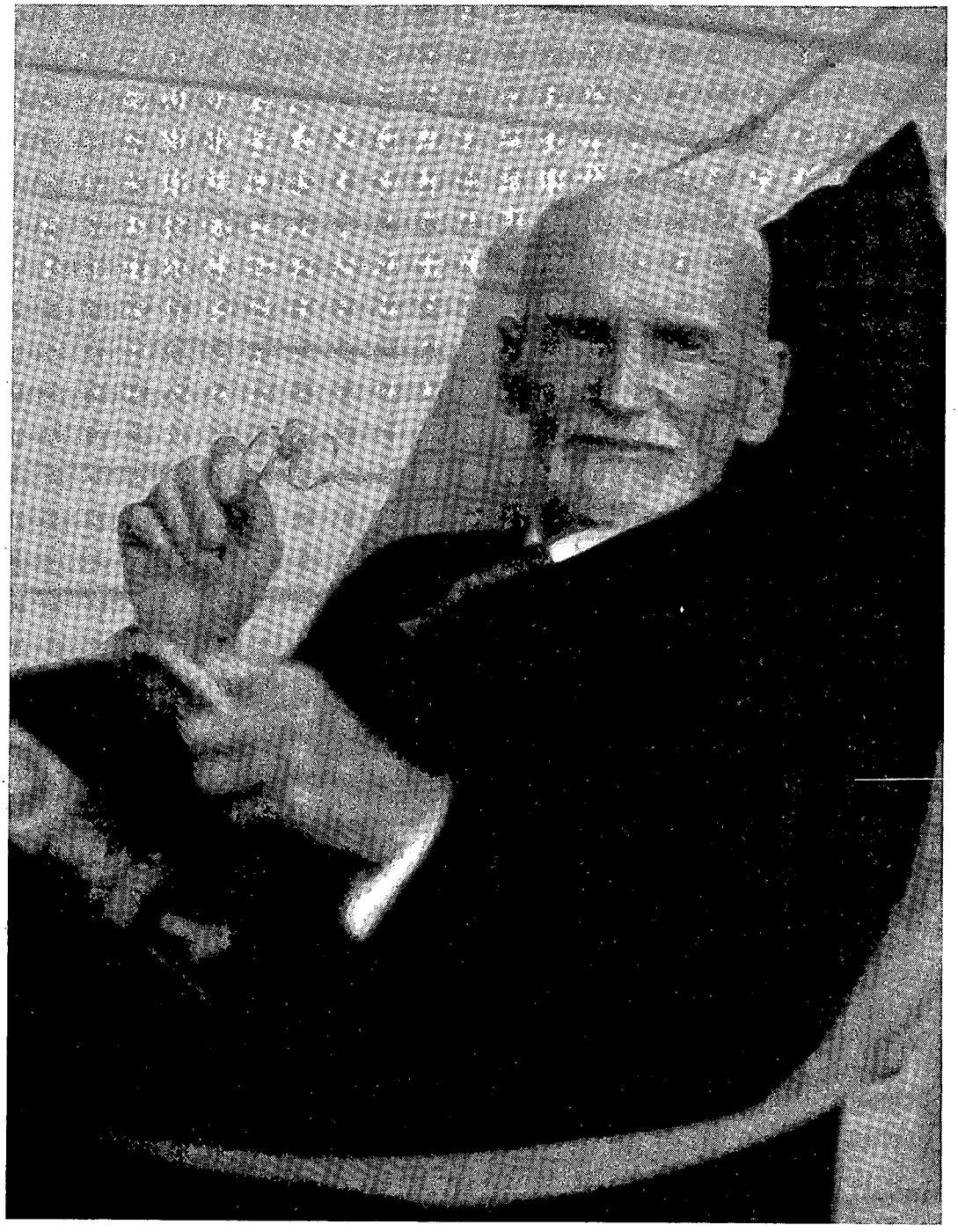

GAMALIEL BRADFORD

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twenty or thirty finished prints instead of the scant dozen proofs submitted by the craftiest of commercial photographers. There you are for better or worse, in moods serious or happy, gay or dejected. If you have a soul it is sure to speak to you out of at least one of the white cardboard frames. For that is what Doris Ulmann has been looking for, as you have quietly smoked your cigarette and straightened your necktie. One picture, according to Mrs. Ulmann, cannot express an individual, and that is why she is as liberal with her prints as with her time and her patience. If she finishes pictures that are not flattering it is because you have your bad moments and she does not believe in fostering your narcissism. Her photographs are not always popular with the art staffs of newspapers and she is frequently the despair of press agents who work only with "glossies" and are concerned with highlights and sharp relief. For her part, she does not care whether or not her photographs are reproduced, since her work has been done long before that question arises.

When she takes a picture of a writer, it is because she wants to study his face, and nowhere in her desk can be found anything so prosaic as a billhead. If you are inclined to show your appreciation, she will be glad to add an autographed copy of your latest book to her collection, although the chances are ten to one that she has read it already and that that is the reason she asked you to sit for her.

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CRITICISM IN AMERICA

III. THE END OF THE ANTI-HUMANIST MYTH

by Seward Collins

It was a foregone conclusion that the symposium of humanist essays, *Humanism and America*, would have a bad press. When it appeared toward the end of February it quickly became one of the most universally condemned books ever published. Dailies, weeklies, monthlies and quarterlies united to pronounce the book itself a mess, the men who wrote it mostly fools, and the ideas they stand for dangerous or ridiculous illusions. The reviewers almost to a man forsook the minimum obligation of their calling, that of telling their readers what the book was about, and gave themselves up exclusively to recording how grievously the book had offended them; or, in some cases, how grievously they had been offended by earlier books of some of the contributors. I must straightway make an exception of the first review that appeared, Harry Hansen's in the New York *World*. As we have seen, he was interested in humanism from the start. His frequent references to it in his influential column had much to do with awakening public interest. In reviewing *Humanism and America* he made a real attempt to give his readers an idea of what humanism is. To be sure, he showed little grasp of it, and concluded that "the humanist wears a high hat and steps out upon the pavement with the halting steps of advancing age", but his review at least earned the tribute, Good Try.

A more "authentic" note was struck the next day in the *Evening Post* by C. Hartley Grattan, taking time out from his arduous labors preparing the counterblast to humanism. "By all means read this book," he said. "I am glad that the humanists published it, for it will do more damage to their cause than anything else; more damage, even than THE BOOKMAN." He warned readers not to be misled by the humanists' ability in literary criticism, "which the intelligent reader will often find admirable", and pieces of which in the symposium Mr. Grattan had found "exhilarating" and "really brilliant". Readers ought to examine the humanists' assumptions; "we find that they involve dogmatic dismissals of whole areas of modern knowledge. . . . The assumptions are radically discontinuous with the bases of modern knowledge and cannot but be false". For to Mr. Grattan "modern knowledge", meaning particularly psychology, sociology, and the "philosophy of science", are the last word, in value as well as in time, of human wisdom. I shall never weary of the ever-fresh naïveté of the modernist who can scold traditionalists for their "dogmatic dismissals of whole areas of modern knowledge", the while his own dogmatic dismissals embrace most of the knowledge attained through the whole course of history.

But it was not until the *Herald Tribune* spoke that the anti-humanist reviewing got into its proper swing. The *Herald Tribune*, for the most part conservative, in its literary

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section succumbed early in the twenties to the post-war rush of the modern and emancipated, and has preserved the tradition into the thirties. Presumably the paper had thought it was getting something appropriate to its general tone in Stuart Sherman, but, as all the world knows, Sherman promptly revealed that he had reversed himself behind the scenes. Since Sherman's death the *Herald Tribune* has presented the strange spectacle of a dignified, conservative daily with a book supplement interchangeable with that of the *Nation*. There must have been considerable competition among the *Herald Tribune's* regular contributors for the privilege of giving *Humanism and America* a slating. The honor was won by Irwin Edman, whose eagerness for the task must indeed have been compelling. His colleague John Dewey had just celebrated his seventieth birthday, and Professor Edman had been furiously engaged for weeks in making the occasion a fitting one, writing tribute after tribute in magazines and newspapers, extravagantly reviewing in every possible organ the numerous books by and about Dewey brought out by the great day. Barely recovered from his frenzied labors, what should he hear of but the approaching humanist manifesto. What! A book from those people? Irving Babbitt, who has called Dewey's influence in education a national calamity? Paul Elmer More, who is nothing less than a Christian? Let me at them! I imagine that Mrs. Van Doren had no choice but to yield the book to him.

It is not very often that one is favored with the spectacle of a professor of philosophy giving himself up to a squawk of sheer rage. That in itself made Dr. Edman's review amusing, but there was the added joy for humanists of getting so lovely a rise out of a Columbia philosopher and a Deweyite. Nothing, I think, could delight humanists more than to make a Columbia philosopher angry. You might almost say that their main aim in life is to reveal the absurdity of what might be called in round numbers, the Columbia School of Philosophy. And when an admirer of John Dewey condemns a book—*any* book, let alone one containing the writing of Paul Elmer More, Irving Babbitt, Robert Shafer, Frank Jewett Mather, Sherlock Bronson Gass, Norman Foerster, T. S. Eliot—with such terms as "sloppiness of writing", "bad prose", "mushiness of logic", "loose in thought", "mixed metaphors", "lack of definition"—could anything be more hilarious or more helpful?

But the *Herald Tribune* remembered that Dr. Edman's outburst would reach only the audience of *Books*: there was still the week-day clientele to protect against the humanist contamination. This task was entrusted to Isabel Paterson. Her special qualification for it was that for several weeks she had been proclaiming in her Sunday department that she had not the remotest idea what humanism was. Nobody doubted her, but she and the *Herald Tribune* jumped at the opportunity of demonstrating her ignorance in a column and a half. The only other fact of importance that emerged was that Mrs. Paterson had long been silently nursing an aversion to Matthew Arnold's side-whiskers. I will say for Mrs. Paterson that her exhibition was rather below her level: she does not usually review a book on the basis of reading, so far as her remarks showed, only one chapter; nor does she usually quote matter on the jacket as though it were part of a book's contents. (Dr. Edman also adopted this practice.) The most amusing part of Mrs. Paterson's heated opposition to the humanists is the paradox involved in the fact that she is actually the most sensible of the country's newspaper critics, illuminating her intelligent exposition and appraisal of books with an almost complete absence of the absurdities of her fellow anti-humanists.

The New York *Times*, also, still bears in its book section the marks of its surrender to the popular clamor of the twenties. It never went to the extremes of the *Herald Tribune*, but it quite naturally greeted humanism with

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firm if dignified hostility. The *Times's* humanism editor, Mr. John Chamberlain, reviewed *Humanism and America* with comparative mildness, for the most part merely telling the humanists that they are not so "liberal" and "creative" as certain men that he admires. Mr. Chamberlain seems to count it a blow against the humanists to give a list of his heroes among the critics; he produces his list every time he writes about the humanists. It always includes Brooks, Lippmann and Mumford, sometimes Bourne, Edman, and J. T. Adams, occasionally Waldo Frank, Dr. Canby and Edmund Wilson. The humanists, oddly enough, remain unimpressed. But Mr. Chamberlain did not shrink from touching the philosophical issues, his contribution being a challenging question: will the humanists' "dualism that sets off men from the quantitative order of nature stand scrutiny?" The humanists shivered in their shoes. Nor were the scientific issues beyond his scope. He was able to assert that Louis T. More is not interested in the will, because Mr. More refuses to take seriously "the later theories of physics which reduce matter and form to different manifestations of something ultimately mysterious, and which lead, in a philosophy of process, to the rehabilitation of relative freedom of the will as a working hypothesis". Really, the gullibility of our critics when the Eddingtons and Millikans try to philosophize and the Whiteheads and Alexanders try to theologize passes belief.

Which leads by a natural transition to Dr. Canby's review of *Humanism and America.* Dr. Canby had somehow got humanism confused with the men-and-machines talk which has been so popular in recent years among the superficial. He explained to his readers that these humanists were opposing "the mechanizing of America", "this speed-dizzy, matter-sodden age", "the rush and rattle of our profit-seeking civilization", "the poison of mechanism which is making of our civilization one vast machine for production and consumption", and so on. Just where Dr. Canby got this idea I do not know; certainly not from *Humanism and America* nor from the long row of humanist books to which it is at once the postscript and the introduction. If the notion could be ascribed merely to lack of familiarity with humanist literature, the point would not be worth emphasizing, since there is no law compelling even critics to read the finest criticism that America has produced. But it is apparent that the notion is but the other side of that intoxication with science which we have noted. Just as when Dr. Canby wants to praise the times he talks rapturously about the achievements of science and tries to give science the right of way, so when he wants to criticize the times he can do it only in terms of machinery, inventions and industrialism. Hence, gathering that the humanists are opposed to most that is "modern", he jumped to the conclusion that they must be constantly worried about machinery, noise and big business. In this he was far from the truth. For just as the humanists refuse to yield to the lure of science-worship and are insistent on science's remaining in its proper place, so they also decline to waste energy on the secondary and external results of the intellectual and moral confusions to which they are so powerfully opposed.

But anyway, having pictured the humanists as machine-maddened, noise-nervous and factory-frenzied, Dr. Canby hastened to assure them that he shared these feelings with them, but that he disliked their remedies. Then he proceeded to translate his prejudice against the humanist philosophy and morals into congenial mechanical terms. "For them," he said, meaning the humanists, "a skyscraper tower is only a dead geometry of steel raised by commerce for the gratification of greed." Then, with the air of laying humanism low, he added, "True—and yet it is beautiful". To which a humanist might reply, Beautiful—but how did skyscrapers get into this? Again Dr. Canby protests that "it is better to try to ride the machines than to pretend that they can be disinvented"—thus utterly squelching

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all the humanists who are opposed to airplanes, fluoroscopes and reapers, and take for their motto, Don't telegraph, write.

For the rest, Dr. Canby mingled insults at the humanists—"self-righteousness", "a touch of the pharisee", "active dislike of life in all its most energetic manifestations"—with his usual dithryambic dither about science—"Our quality of excellence has been found prevailingly in pure science where we have demonstrably transcended all earlier periods", "modern science has certainly illumined the subtle relationships of the intellect or imagination of man with the instincts, the physical and chemical reactions, the pressures of environment". Like Mr. Chamberlain, Dr. Canby goes to the philosophizing physicists to learn whether he has any will or not: "The only proof of the invalidity of determinism is the demonstration by the second law of thermodynamics that matter is not ultimately governed by the law of cause and effect". (Quite apart from Dr. Canby's peculiar idea of what the law of cause and effect is, it is worth noting that his interpretation of the particular law which he mentions, picked up from Eddington, had been contested by no less eminent physicists before he wrote his piece. Whatever be the ultimate consensus, it is certainly true, as Harvey Wickham has suggested, that those who want to make their philosophy conform to the latest thing in science ought not to try to write books or even magazine articles: they ought to have a ticker.) He seems to think that the humanists invented their dualism, which he calls "the crude symbolism of a Sunday school story". Aristotle, he insists, "would never thus have dogmatized over dualism" while the returns from science were not all in.

But as I said before Dr. Canby is to be preferred to most of the anti-humanists: he is willing to put himself all down on paper: one knows where one is with him. He concluded his review with a description of his ideal "humanist", who "will meet the present with open eyes, holding his principles as a man holds a line of poetry in his mind, ready for the new word which will bring the verse to life". Exactly. It is that kind of moral estheticism, that fatal confusion of realms, to which the humanists are chiefly opposed. And they are also, I might remark, hilariously amused by the picture of Dr. Canby among the annunciation lilies waiting for the Spirit of Science to inform him by amendments to the laws of thermodynamics whether or not he has any will or intelligence, and what is right and what is wrong.

The "liberal" weeklies got into action against *Humanism and America* with Henry Hazlitt of the *Nation*. Mr. Hazlitt had calmed himself from the mood of his first article and instead of a hymn of hate sought to present an exposure of concrete weaknesses. Mr. Hazlitt has the oddest method of controversy I ever saw. It consists of quoting a sentence, any sentence, and then saying something, *anything*, about it in a contemptuous tone. It does not matter whether his comment is connected with his quotation, or whether his comment in itself makes sense: he passes on to his next point quite as though he were leaving a victim behind him. For instance, with the air of displaying an absurdity he quoted this sentence from G. R. Elliott: "The human task is to clarify and obey, as well as we can, Laws which we did not invent". To which Mr. Hazlitt said: "It would seem to me both difficult and presumptuous for man to attempt to clarify Laws which he had no hand in inventing". What on earth does Mr. Hazlitt suppose the aims of science, philosophy, and (just to make him mad) religion to be? To *invent* laws?

Sometimes he is more elaborate and finds a "contradiction". The trick here is to look for a nice roomy word with diverse meanings, and to quote (without regard to context or intent) a place where it is used favorably and a place where it is used unfavorably: *ergo*, contradiction. Thus, Babbitt opposes the Bergsonian intuition, but he also elsewhere praises the faculty of

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intuition; Mr. Hazlitt brought out the "self-contradiction" here by equating this second use with "appropriating the entire Bergsonian poison". . . . So fascinated did I become by Mr. Hazlitt's mental processes during recent months that I looked into his book *Thinking as a Science*, and I was not surprised to find that Ella Wheeler Wilcox and John Dewey are quoted as authorities, while Aristotle is not mentioned. The book, to be sure, was a youthful one; I would not consider it sporting to refer to it if I could detect any signs of improvement in the meantime.

The first of the monthlies to review *Humanism and America* was the *Forum*, to which an early copy had naturally been sent. But the *Forum* suddenly turned and bit the humanist hand which up to this time it had been so fondly clasping. The book was assigned to a reviewer known to be unsympathetic, Granville Hicks, an able young critic whose native good sense has enabled him to rise above much of the contemporary nonsense without enabling him to criticize the first principles which he shares with it. His trouble seems to be an acute case of what might be called Christophobia. His main complaint against the Humanists is that "five of them are openly allied with institutionalized Christianity", while none of the others expresses any violent hostility to Christianity; which Mr. Hicks interprets as meaning that they "are obviously committed, whether they realize it or not, to traditional theism". Quite aside from the inaccuracy of Mr. Hicks's statistics—not five but three of the fifteen contributors to *Humanism and America* suffer the horrendous disability of being Christians—there was never a more laughable misconception of a body of men who have taken great pains to make their views apparent. It would be hard to find anywhere, for instance, more resolute, more obviously permanent sceptics than Irving Babbitt, Norman Foerster or Frank Jewett Mather.

What Mr. Hicks has done is to get his anti-Christianity mixed up with his naturalistic monism and his lingering romantic liberalism. He practically identifies dualism with Christianity, which not only reveals a shocking ignorance of philosophical history, but would seem to put Mr. Hicks in a most unfortunate position. If he is going to reject all the philosophical and moral convictions that have been acceptable to "institutionalized Christianity", he will find himself left with pretty thin pickings. But the humanists' conviction that man differs essentially from the animals does more, in Mr. Hicks's view, than "drive them into the church": it makes their attitude toward life "parched", "meagre", "arid" and "narrow"; and furthermore puts them under "the necessity of regarding literature as composed of a series of pamphlets advocating the inner check". It is not surprising that Mr. Hicks's lack of logic and his passion for excluding Christians lead him to charge the humanists with "self-righteous exclusiveness".

The reviewers outside of New York were not slow to take up the cry. Perhaps their isolation weakened their courage in the face of the onrushing current; a more marked note of panic crept into their words. Thus Karl Schriftgiesser of the Boston *Transcript*, who, as was noted in the second part of this article, only a few weeks before was recording himself as sympathetically interested in this novelty on the literary horizon:

"America, land of fads and cults, is in danger of succumbing whole-heartedly to this new and dogmatic panacea for all our literary ills, and of surrendering without reserve to a little group of men whose whole aim in life seems to be to glorify the past, warn the future, and damn our present times. . . . This Humanistic philosophy is dangerous in the extreme. . . . *Humanism and America* is a most readable book, and perhaps in its very facileness lies its greatest danger. One has always been taught to beware the person with too glib a tongue. Few writers are able to weave their thoughts in such mysti-

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fying and seductive language as these protagonists of 'the new faith' ".

A similar warning against the insidious wiles of the slippery humanists was sounded by Robert Beith in the Portland *Express*: "These writers are brilliant and they present their case in a capable and convincing way. There is the danger". But most of the out-of-town men took their cue from the more crafty New York reviewers and pronounced the humanists unreadable and stupid as well as mistaken and perverse; or, in the words of an angry letter to the *Saturday Review of Literature* from Elmer Davis: "longwinded, arrogant, and dull". Nothing new was added by the chorus outside New York, but I cannot forbear quoting a few sentences from a lengthy article in the Des Moines *Register* by Victor Schultz, described as "a Des Moines philosopher".

Mr. Schultz objected, for one thing, to the humanists' appropriating a glorious old name: "The new humanists are not enthusiastic, but the old certainly were. Is Babbitt a logical successor to Boccaccio? One wants to tear the ancient crown off these pallid brows that usurp it". He objected also to the humanists' opposition to excessive naturalism: "They add that we must not confuse man with nature. They forget how much we have learned of man by studying the animals. . . . I am told that certain muscles of the heart have been located by studying the variations in the same organ of the turtle".

Just a touch of the out-of-town panic crept into Mr. Schultz's strictures: "If we let it prevail it means an end of experiment and discovery and the beginning of discouragement, the end of freedom and the beginning of a new repression. It means a new Victorian era. We are surely not far enough away to have forgotten that horror". But his horror of the era of Victoria does not prevent Mr. Schultz from succumbing to the science-worship of that eminent and typical Victorian, Thomas Huxley, and the esthetic view of life of that eminent and typical Victorian, Walter Pater: "The modern temper is a scientific one, taking delight in experiment, observing the world as change, perhaps progress, perhaps not, but suspending judgment until the evidence is all in". A sentence almost identical, you will remember, with one quoted previously from that typical Victorian Dr. Canby. The humanists are really the only anti-Victorians in sight these days.

Meanwhile the newspapers and magazines were not limiting themselves to reviews of *Humanism and America* in their efforts to stamp out the noxious growth. The gas and schrapnel barrage that had greeted the appearance of the humanists at the first of the year was renewed by most of the literary columnists and literary editors. For some time there was a race between William Soskin of the New York Evening *Post* and the personnel of the *Herald Tribune* to see which could drop the most mud on the humanists, the *Herald Tribune* finally winning through sheer numbers. With Isabel Paterson and Lewis Gannett alternating on week-days, and a decade's accumulation of the shrilly emancipated filling the Sunday section, the paper was really invincible in bulk. Mrs. Paterson continued in that attractive state known as a lather, proclaiming that the humanists are actuated by "the irritation of non-understanding, the impulse which leads to the burning of libraries and destruction of works of art by barbarians in war". And again, "If no question is raised, it is not impossible that they might gain a measure of power which would be stultifying to writers". (It is only when agitated by humanists that Mrs. Paterson raises the question whether she is using words without knowing their meaning.)

I do not know whether it was with the hope of having them repeat Rebecca West's December effort or merely because they had already been contracted for and had to be pressed into service that Mrs. Van Doren induced her British guest critics to enter the anti-humanist lists. The experiment was

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hardly successful, though both H. M. Tomlinson and Hugh Walpole tried hard to be obliging. But they labored under the frightful handicap of knowing even less what it was all about than most of the other anti-humanists, their total information apparently consisting of the shocked reports of Mrs. Van Doren and Mrs. Paterson (and, possibly, Will Cuppy) about the horrors looming up in American life with this threatened return to order and decency. The biggest shock of all is coming for THE BOOKMAN's distinguished contributor, Mr. Walpole, when he looks into some of the humanist books and sees what he was writing against. It should be said to his credit, and to Mr. Tomlinson's (and to Mrs. Paterson's, too, for the first few weeks), that they frankly admitted their ignorance. Probably never before was there so much ignorance on an important subject concentrated in one newspaper office.

James Branch Cabell, when it came his turn to respond to Mrs. Van Doren's plea for at least one blow for freedom in his guest critic series, was rather better informed; and also very disillusioned, a little bitter, and oh, so subtle and sly. It was disappointing to a respecter of Cabell's wit to see him reduced to building his whole piece around the ancient wheeze consisting of confusing the two Babbitts. And if I may be pardoned for saying so, the highest tribute to THE BOOKMAN's January article called "Farewell to the Twenties" was received when Cabell felt obliged to counter with the claim that the literary average of the late decade "is by a great deal the best average as yet attained by any decade in American letters". I thought at first I must be missing a fine shade of the Cabellian irony. But there it was in all seriousness. That is protesting too, too, *too* much.

Suddenly, on March 15, a miracle happened: an able anti-humanist article appeared: Walter Lippmann's "Humanism as Dogma", in the *Saturday Review of Literature*. The article was an exception to the current run in the power of its writing and in its willingness to deal seriously with some of the main issues. But it was far from being wholly admirable, and still further from being up to what might have been expected from its author. On the contrary, not only was it lamentably confused in its arguments —for the most part merely throwing back at the humanists the ideas they are engaged in combating—but it was also petty in its stratagems and peevish in its tone. It is indeed a serious reflection on the state of our criticism that Mr. Lippmann's should have to be called the ablest hostile article provoked throughout a long controversy on an important subject.

One of Mr. Lippmann's stratagems was an attempt to separate violently the two leading humanists: for More he has only the highest praise—"a spiritual genius . . . a nature that combines in exquisite proportions a delicate sensibility with a hard-headed instinct for reality . . . a man who is authentically concerned with the first and last things of human experience"; while Babbitt lacks imagination, lacks sensibility, and has made an impression by sheer force of repeating formulas which have been narrowed and hardened in the course of years. Now it is certainly legitimate to try to "divide and rule". And Babbitt and More may certainly be contrasted, and one easily preferred to the other. But not in Mr. Lippmann's way. For in all the matters of opinion in which he proceeds to differ with Babbitt, Babbitt and More are at one. Mr. Lippmann tries to glide over this fact, which wrecks his antithesis except as a trivial rhetorical trick, by calling More's contribution to the symposium "a rather poor sample" of his writing, when it is actually, besides being in agreement with Babbitt, fully representative. It is obvious that we are in the presence of a familiar phenomenon, a modernist able to tolerate and even admire a Christian who holds views which in a sceptic drive him to fury. And "fury" is a proper word for the way in which Mr. Lippmann goes on to

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lash out at Babbitt, a lashing that is directed at him personally as much as at his ideas.

Another instance of Mr. Lippmann's indirect method of differing with the humanists' ideas is provided when he illustrates Babbitt's stubbornness and rigidity by saying that he had heard all the ideas of humanism in Babbitt's courses at Harvard twenty years ago. It is amusing to see these pupils of Babbitt, after years of complete indifference, suddenly becoming experts in his work, usually when launching into a criticism which shows very little understanding of it. Back in 1916 Van Wyck Brooks interrupted his onslaught on Babbitt to say of him in a parenthesis "to whose vigorous intellect, by the way, many of us are greatly indebted". It must be counted as one of Professor Babbitt's greatest triumphs if he actually prevented Brooks from being worse than he was. Gilbert Seldes is another anti-Babbittian who speaks as an authority on the strength of his class-room experience; and yet he can talk in his New York *Graphic* column as though Babbitt's work were touched by such an inept tirade as Edmund Wilson's.

It is said of one of the best known of Babbitt's hostile pupils that when asked what he got out of his work under Babbitt, he answered "Nothing but a lot of good quotations". This was not Mr. Lippmann, but a reader of his books might think so if he were watching for reflections of Babbitt's influence. There is not a sign, scarcely a reference, until suddenly in *A Preface to Morals* Babbitt becomes one of the most frequently cited names —but every reference turns out to be a quotation from a French author "as quoted in *Rousseau and Romanticism*"! This is trivial, to be sure, but one could hardly be more trivial than is Mr. Lippmann in thinking it important to prove by his personal witness that Babbitt's main ideas have not changed in twenty years. In fact any force that the point has is quite on the other side. Mr. Lippmann and the other Harvardians who cry "old stuff" are still, it happens, several years younger than Babbitt was when he published his first book. They absurdly find it absurd that a man who first wrote in his mid-forties should preserve the same principles in his sixties: they protest against a man's maturing by the time he has reached his mature years. This *ad hominem* argument is, as I say, only cogent if reversed. The truly shocking thing is the way writers who flashed up brilliantly, in their early twenties, full of the eager nonsense of the time, can reach forty with practically no change in their point of view. There is no more depressing experience in American criticism than to read *A Preface to Politics* and *Drift and Mastery*, and then to read *A Preface to Morals*. The earlier books are (unlike Babbitt's) woefully out of date, but the shocking fact is the absence of development in the latest: a little less hopefulness, a little less brilliance, but the same themes and almost the same treatment: the confusion of modernism, and the "cure" for it in the marvellous new sociological and psychological discoveries that have just been made or are just on the point of being made. Mr. Lippmann was one of the first writers in this country to introduce Freud into criticism. That was well enough in 1912, at twenty-three. But it is a sign of something fatally wrong to have made no change in the meantime except by supplementing Freud with Ferenczi.

But the staleness of Babbitt's ideas and his stubbornness in hammering at them for twenty years are not all that Mr. Lippmann is bent on establishing in his circuitous approach to the ideas themselves. He only reaches his stride of angry invective with a third notion, on which he rings the changes throughout his article. Babbitt has "hardened his teaching to a doctrine and narrowed his sympathy to a sect", he is engaged in propagating "exact formulas", "organizing a sect" and "excommunicating heretics". The words "strict doctrine" and "sectarian" recur like a refrain in Mr. Lippmann's piece. Other words are "arrogant", "dogmatic", "cocksure", "ex-

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clusive" and "insufferably superior". Now if Mr. Lippmann were, like most of the anti-humanists, merely an irresponsible satirist adopting the cheap and easy trick of translating into minimizing terms every available fact about his opponent, without regard to the merits involved, there would be nothing to say about this sort of stuff; it would deserve no comment. But Mr. Lippmann is a serious man, grimly in earnest about humanism. He is obviously under the impression that he is making some sort of point by contemptuously saying "sect", "strict doctrine", "exact formulas", and the rest. Actually, of course, he is indulging in the same childish petulance that led him to try to make Babbitt's mature constancy seem stubbornness and narrowness: now he is arguing against Babbitt's having any convictions at all. He is protesting against Babbitt's doing what he knows very well a man is admirable only in proportion as he does it: building up a set of standards and passing judgments in accordance with them. The standards may be criticized, and the consistency of the application: but the act of judging can only be admired.

Mr. Lippmann's irritation at Babbitt's rock-like firmness actually leads him to the fatuous point of putting his complaint into plain language: he indignantly protests that Babbitt should have "open-mindedness", that he should "withhold judgment". Now really, Mr. Lippmann doesn't have to swallow the more obviously nonsensical cant of the modernists just because their philosophy appeals to him. "Open-mindedness" is a virtue in its place, but there is a superior virtue, as every man knows if he will examine what he really thinks: closing the mind down hard. There is nothing more embarrassingly silly than these pleas for the state of vacuity which is chronic open-mindedness, coming from men who have closed their minds to most of the wisdom of the past, and now keep themselves in a fever of hope and expectation that laboratories and clinics will furnish a new outfit of wisdom—at the same time calling their state "open-mindedness" and berating everybody else for arrogance, obstinacy, obscurantism. The blatant self-contradiction of a man's condemning another man for not "suspending judgment"—whether it comes from witlessness, insincerity, or, as in Mr. Lippmann's case, blinding rage—is beyond comment.

Since Mr. Lippmann insists on being so personal ("Pride", he says at one point, "is perhaps the besetting sin of Mr. Babbitt's whole approach to life"), it is not inappropriate to record the opinion that he has rather given himself away when he charges Babbitt not to "indulge in the hollow pretension that he is standing securely on the Rock of Ages and can from there put everybody else in his place". For Babbitt had indeed put Mr. Lippmann in his place a few months before, in a review of *A Preface to Morals* (*Forum*, July, 1929); also in some paragraphs of the symposium essay. He had put him in his place by a calm, dignified, weighty analysis, completely impersonal, moderate in tone, but authoritative and final. I should say that the contrast in tone between the two pieces of writing measures the effectiveness of the review, and also the calibre of the men. It has been urged, and with truth, that Babbitt could have afforded, without compromising his principles, to be more generously appreciative of Mr. Lippmann's abilities and the considerable insight shown in sections of his book. But Babbitt, as usual, went to the heart of the matter. There were a hundred thousand others to perform the less important if more gracious business.

It has seemed worth while to deal at this length with Mr. Lippmann's particular version of the Anti-Humanist Myth, because Mr. Lippmann's conspicuous abilities might make it appear to some that he was occupied with facts instead of merely translating his differences of opinion into contemptuous language and personal abuse. Satire is a fair weapon, but satirical descriptions obviously

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intended to be taken seriously, and actually so taken, may be worth examining. Mr. Lippmann is now, in his article, almost ready to tackle some of the humanists' ideas. But his approach is delayed by one more attempt at a flank attack. Babbitt's use of the word humanism makes him almost as angry as Babbitt's firmness of mind, or, as we shall see, Babbitt's objection to unsound philosophy pretending to have scientific sanction. I have discussed previously Babbitt's use of the word humanism, and do not need to do more here than look at Mr. Lippmann's objections and his own use of it.

It immediately becomes evident that Mr. Lippmann has never inquired into the word's history, in spite of the fact that he is challenging another's use of it and in spite of the fact that the word occupies a central position in his book *A Preface to Morals*. Otherwise he would know better than to say that "the term humanism has been current for at least five hundred years". Actually the word is not one quarter so old as that. In English, for instance, it goes back less than one hundred years. The point may seem pedantic, since the word humanist is somewhat older. But in reality the point is all-important: for the fact is that *all* attempts to define humanism are very recent, dating back only to the period one hundred or one hundred and fifty years ago when our current ideas of the Renaissance, the Reformation, and the Middle Ages, with which the historic humanists were inextricably connected, were being formulated. If Mr. Lippmann is aware of how drastically the current conceptions of those terms are being overhauled by leading scholars, he will think twice before he is—to borrow a little of the Lippmann language—so dogmatic, so cocksure, so insufferably superior as to try to put Babbitt in his place not from facts, not even from well-established theory, but from recent speculations about a period still so near to us that everything about it is in the realm of dispute and fresh discovery.

Mr. Lippmann gives his own definition of humanism: "An attitude signifying man's intention of finding a good life in this world by the human faculties". In the essay of Babbitt's which he is so scornfully condemning he had read this description of the first humanists: "They were thus encouraged to aim at a harmonious development of their faculties in this world rather than at an other-worldly felicity". If that were all there was to it, the two brands of humanism could not be told apart. It is not the formulation but the application that counts. And it is well known that Mr. Lippmann's highly individual and completely modernistic use of the word makes it very laughable for him to accuse anybody of departing from the historic meaning. In the chapter in *A Preface to Morals* in which he expounds "the insight of humanism", he makes it synonymous with certain findings which he adopts from psycho-analysis, and then proceeds to make it synonymous with what he calls high religion. The only Renaissance humanists I can think of who would not be appalled by this use are certain unsavory individuals with whom Mr. Lippmann would not find himself quite at ease.

You will notice that Mr. Lippmann's definition is largely negative: that is, its animus is opposition and contrast to the Christian tradition: "a good life in this world" instead of preparation for a life beyond; "by the human faculties" instead of with superhuman aid. But he forgets this in the next paragraph in order to try to score off Babbitt by means of a variation of the device known as heads-I-win-tails-you-lose, by juggling with negative affirmative terms. The effectiveness of every argument of this kind depends, of course, on the fact that negation and rejection sound forbidding to modern ears, whereas affirmation and acceptance sound lovely; without regard to the obvious fact that everything can be expressed in both ways, that a negation of one thing is an affirmation of another, and vice versa.

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But Mr. Lippmann's deviousness is more elaborate than that. He spends several hundred words singling out the positive aspects of Renaissance humanism for praise, and harping exclusively on the negative aspects of the new humanism in such words as these: "It is curiously ironical and, I think, extremely pertinent that the original humanists of the Renaissance should have been men of insatiable curiosity whereas the latter-day humanists seem to be chiefly concerned with deciding what they are going to reject". And again "It is characteristic of this difference in spirit that whereas the men of the Renaissance welcomed eagerly the new learning of their age, Mr. Babbitt's humanists are unhappy over the new learning of theirs". Such a manner of argument seems to me to be beneath contempt.

"Unhappy" is the mildest word that Mr. Lippmann uses in his attempt to show that the humanists are opposed to science. The rest of the article is a farrago of misrepresentation, abuse and shocking ignorance designed to show that the humanists are obscurantists about modern science, that they are "eager to discredit science", that they are engaged "in the discreditable business of trying to limit the field of scientific inquiry", and that they think the only way to preserve values to which they are attached "is to refuse to study mankind scientifically". Mr. Lippmann adds: "This is an old fear among men. It was prevalent some time ago in Tennessee. It is disturbing to find it at Harvard". In other words, Mr. Lippmann is engaged in the discreditable business of making a demagogic appeal to the prevalent rage for "science" in order to rouse prejudice against a group of men who have the temerity to differ with him in some points of philosophy and in some practical conclusions resulting therefrom. For it is, of course, a philosophic issue between the humanists and their opponents, even when the opponents try to keep matters on the plane of calling the humanists a little group of blind, stubborn, vindictive, dangerous men. But I must confess that I am at a loss to know whether Mr. Lippmann is aware of what the underlying issues are or not. It is incredible to me that he should not be, and I have assumed all along that he was. But now that I sit down and examine carefully his comments on the humanists and science, it becomes even less credible that it is proper to invoke in this instance the excuse that has been serviceable for some of his minor aberrations: namely, that his fit of temper pushed him below his real level.

For to believe that would be to believe that Mr. Lippmann is willing to add to the tricks of the cheap demagogue the methods of the shyster lawyer. I refer to the passage in which he has picked some phrases out of the essay by Dean More, twisted their meaning beyond recognition, mixed them up with a phrase of Paul E. More's and a phrase of Babbitt's, strung them all together with misleading comments of his own, and announced triumphantly that the resulting hodge-podge is an exposure of "the verbal confusion that lies at the heart of humanism". No. I prefer to believe that Mr. Lippmann simply has not understood what the humanists are saying. Even when he reports, as he does of Dean More's piece, "I have read this essay several times to be sure that I was not seeing things", there is only one comment to make: Mr. Lippmann was seeing things. For what preceded that statement was this: "They demanded at the outset . . . that scientists cease and desist from investigating the human psyche", and what followed it was this: "But there is no escape from it. Dean More, as the official scientist of the Babbitt humanists, shuts the door tight. Scientists must not deal with the phenomena of emotion and thought". That is to distort the humanist meaning outrageously in two fundamental ways. It is to make them deny that a large part of the human psyche is open to the methods of science, a fact which they assert unceasingly and welcome

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enthusiastically. It is, furthermore, to glide over the legitimate and all-important distinction which Dean More makes throughout his piece between the methods of *science* and *other* methods for dealing with human nature. What it comes down to is that Mr. Lippmann avoids the real issues and tries to score a debating point by means of a matter of nomenclature.

Dean More makes it perfectly plain that he is using the scientific method to mean the method "as evolved from chemistry and physics", and that he calls science only what is thus arrived at. This is an entirely legitimate and very general use of the word. It is, in fact, one of the only two legitimate uses, the other being the more literal one of calling a science any branch of human knowledge and the methods appropriate to it. The whole difference between Mr. Lippmann and Dean More is that Dean More accompanies his use of science with the corollary that human nature does not in its entirety come under the laws of chemistry and physics, and that the studies which involve these specifically human elements, the humanistic disciplines, should be classed not under science but under philosophy. Mr. Lippmann thinks and talks of ethics, religion, politics, etc., as though they were exact sciences in a rudimentary state. As I say, by harping on these differences of names and classifications, and by neglecting the real underlying issues, Mr. Lippmann strives to make it appear that the humanists are "opposed to science".

The only place in which he refers to the fundamental conflict between a monistic and a dualistic conception of man is a passing reference to the humanists' position as a "crude metaphysical dogma". Now I for one am willing to accept this characterization as quite (though unintentionally) accurate: since dogma means opinion; and since psychology is, at least in the useful classification of von Wolff, a branch of metaphysics; and since Babbitt's formulation of his dualism is deliberately, avowedly crude, in the sense that he does not feel the need of adding theoretical refinements to the fact of universal experience which he is emphasizing. The only contrast I can find between the humanists' crude metaphysical dogma and Mr. Lippmann's (aside, that is, from the terrific contrast in soundness) is that Mr. Lippmann's is so crude in his own mind that he doesn't express it at all. Perhaps he would even deny it: he gives at times the appearance of a man trying to enjoy the fruits of a dualistic position from a basis of monism. But his monistic, mechanistic, deterministic postulates are apparent in all that he writes.

There was never a neater give-away of his position and the nonsense inherent in it than in the definition of science which Mr. Lippmann presents with the air of squelching the humanists, after referring to their efforts along these lines as "uncritical cocksureness", "blundering", and "misunderstanding the essence of the matter". I have italicized the significant words: "Wherever phenomena, be they 'subjective' or 'objective', mechanical, determinate, indeterminate, organic, or human, are investigated *with the purpose of verifying hypotheses*, there science is at work". That is to say, the presence or absence of sound science is determined only by the purpose of the would-be scientist. If his intentions are good and his hopes are rosy, there science is at work. It does not matter whether he understands the highly complex process of sound hypothesizing, it does not matter if he is not trained in the subtle technique of verifying hypotheses: it is his purpose that counts. Mr. Lippmann might say that he was presupposing sound methods. But that assumption involves assuming the answer to the very question the humanists are raising. The whole problem is not a matter of science vs. anti-science, but of sound science vs. pseudo-science. By using scientific terms loosely, by tacitly making unwarranted assumptions, by creating formulas that justify every crackbrained would-be scientist, Mr. Lippmann is

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making himself a champion of pseudo-science and hastening the day when sound but ignorant people will revolt *en masse* against the quackery forced on them in the name of science, to the damage of genuine science. It is the humanists who are serving the best interests of science, and gullible publicists like Walter Lippmann who are impeding and endangering it.

The word hypothesis, which figures in Mr. Lippmann's definition of science, is as clear a witness to his ignorance of true science as is his introduction of a wishful ingredient into the scientific method. It is obvious that he has never made a study of the use of hypothesis. For him it is just a word with a scientific flavor which he has picked up without understanding, and found useful in achieving the major formulation of his present scheme of things: the idea that the "saints and sages and heroes" of history were faint forerunners of the modern laboratory and clinical psychologists. All that we have received from the men of the Dark Ages before Freud, according to Mr. Lippmann, is "crude hypothesis and partial insight". The same use of the word is seen in his comments in another place on marriage: "The convention of marriage, when it is clarified by insight into reality, is likely to be the hypothesis upon which men and women will ordinarily proceed". (The clarifying, by the way, is to be done by "all this immense experimenting", meaning the modern sexual confusion; "experimenting" being another scientific word drafted for pseudo-scientific purposes.) Such usage of the word hypothesis, which occurs throughout Mr. Lippmann's recent writings, is simply not allowable in any work pretending to speak in behalf of science. Quite aside from the fact that to believe, as Mr. Lippmann obviously does, that Aristotle would have benefited by working with Freud, that Buddha and Confucius suffered by not knowing the books of Ferenczi, and that Christ should have been psycho-analyzed, is simply, in Mr. Lippmann's phrase, to misunderstand the essence of the matter. In fact, of a great many matters.

It is this matter of psychology, and particularly Mr. Lippmann's pet school of psycho-analysis, that rouses his greatest ire. In examining Mr. Lippmann's definition of science I have not been resorting to the stratagem of making the most possible out of an unfortunate phrase. However he might strive to protect his definition by dialectic and rhetoric, its essential absurdity would still remain, for it is central to his philosophy. What he is doing, what he must do, is maintain a conception of science that will allow mechanistic methods to be applied to the human soul. Since they *haven't* been successfully applied, the definition has to be so framed as to cover mere hope and intention. The whole naturalistic movement must confess its bankruptcy if it can't apply its methods in the only place that, after all, matters. Mr. Lippmann is quite right in rising to do battle against so grave a challenge.

But he also has some ammunition to spend in behalf of less essential matters, as for instance the fashionable metaphysicizing physicists of the day. When Dean More criticizes certain of their procedures, Mr. Lippmann accuses him of "fretful discourtesy". Since when has it been necessary for a physicist to inquire of Mr. Walter Lippmann what tone he may use in speaking of the work of other physicists? If Dean More showed "fretful discourtesy" in expressing the opinion that Whitehead, Eddington and Einstein have pictured a phantasmagoria instead of a world, Mr. Lippmann's comments on the humanists certainly prove him a prime boor. I am not calling Mr. Lippmann names: I am merely reversing his arguments to show how petty they are. Mr. Lippmann is not a boor; but neither was Dean More discourteous.

The tender spot of psycho-analysis brings on more of the same kind of reckless abuse.

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The humanists have not "paused long enough to understand the central themes of pyscho-analytic investigation": they "reject it unexamined". Now this is something that Mr. Lippmann cannot know. What he does know is that such conduct in such men is extremely unlikely. He knows further that plenty of intelligent people have rejected psycho-analysis after becoming thoroughly familiar with it. But remembering such facts would have deprived him of one way of expressing his malevolence. "It seems to me, therefore," he breaks out at one point, after making the comic assertion that the Freudians "are engaged in profound and painstaking research into the problem at the very heart of humanism", "nothing but sheer obscurantism to dismiss psycho-analysis because it approaches the problem from a therapeutic rather than from an ethical point of view." That is sheer obscurantism on Mr. Lippmann's part. He must know that the antithesis between therapeutics and ethics has nothing to do with the matter. He knows, since he has read Freud and his followers, that the psycho-analytic approach is a rigidly deterministic one. He knows, since he has read Babbitt, that that is Babbitt's main quarrel with the so-called scientific psychologists. And the doctrines of psycho-analysis provide plenty of other clashes in first principles between the two realms of thought.

The humanist position does not involve denying value to psycho-analysis in the sub-human fields: where, in childhood, mental disease, etc., people are deficient in the specifically human attributes of intellect and will. But even the most delicate perception of mental disease, and the most fertile of analogical minds, when attached to an unsound philosophy, can only result in a minor contribution to the study of the human soul. And when that contribution becomes connected in the public mind with some of the most dangerous elements in the thought of the time, its power for evil becomes greater than its power for good. In defending psycho-analysis, by the way, Mr. Lippmann was led to perpetrate the egregious howler of identifying the Freudian censor with the humanist inner check. This, and his earlier assertion that the humanists had been anticipated in their strictures on false philosophy claiming scientific sanction by Huxley, William James and John Dewey, make one despair of Mr. Lippmann's ever finding out what it is all about.

In concluding his article, Mr. Lippmann released some claptrap rhetoric about the humanists being men "who will not recognize that mankind is on the march and the will to explore the last crannies of experience is in the very marrow of modernity". Quite so. The humanists' quarrel is with those who are so obsessed with the last crannies that they are unable to move forward at all: the humanists are shouting to them to get back on the highway. "I warn them," says Mr. Lippmann, "that they will not be heard long if this volume of essays is a sample of their genius and their quality." But the humanists are not dismayed, since they do not accept Walter Lippmann as one of the true prophets. On the contrary, they might warn him that he has much to learn—about philosophy, about science, about humanism, about respectable controversy—if he is ambitious to figure as anything but a prophet of yesterday, until the publication of each new book of his makes him for a little while a prophet of the hour.

Another liberal-radical weekly was set under way just in time to add one more note to the anti-humanist chorus, the *New Freeman*, pleasantly reminiscent of the dear, dead days beyond recall when the old *Freeman*, and Van Wyck Brooks and H. L. Mencken and so many other prophets and geniuses of the twenties, were considered way up town. The opening article of Ernest Boyd, the magazine's literary editor, with its bows to Dreiser, Mencken, Brooks, and A. R. Orage, and its sneers at More, Babbitt, and Stuart Sherman;

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its parading of continental names, its fake sophistication and peurile inconsequence, brought back the years with the vividness of a packet of old love-letters. Ah, youth, youth!

At least one of the original *Freeman* writers has not stood still in the meantime. I don't mean that Newton Arvin has become a humanist, or has even become sympathetic, or ever will. But any sign of development among the men of the twenties is so rare as to merit remark; their usual course is to reach what constitutes their maturity before thirty and either to blow up before forty or to go on repeating themselves.—In 1921 Mr. Arvin greeted More's *A New England Group and Others* in the fashion of the day, devoting one single sentence to the book itself and the rest to violent denunciation of More's ethics and manners, with quotations from earlier books, particularly, of course, *Aristocracy and Justice* (*Freeman*, June 1, 1921). He pronounced More "a quarrelsome, and one might almost say a febrile, reactionary", and found him "increasingly raucous, splenetic and vituperative". "His latest volume demonstrates admirably the sterilizing force of the harsh philosophy which he has expounded in *Aristocracy and Justice* and elsewhere." "It is not only that in his literary criticism Mr. More's ethical preoccupation incapacitates him for delivering any truly aesthetic judgments . . . rather that Mr. More's ethics is narrow and sour, and the application of it illiberal." "The line of the 'Shelburne Essays' may stretch out to the crack o' doom, but we shall scarcely look to Mr. More for criticism of a high and fine disinterestedness, for criticism sharply sensitive to the aching aspirations of our own day. There are so many more things in heaven and earth and in the troubled soul of man than are dreamt of in his philosophy."

It was almost impossible for a sensitive young man beginning criticism in the first years of the decade of the nineteen-twenties to write in any other way: the enthusiasm of the on-rushing "new men" and the artfully contrived Anti-Humanist Myth were irresistible. As we have seen in these articles, Mr. Arvin was only like every other critic of the period in identifying his own generous impulses with a particular set of ethical and social doctrines, and assuming that anybody with a different set must be cruel and bigoted; and in translating his resentment at More's power of writing into charges of bad manners. We have seen that this blindly emotional manner of debating has been revived with enthusiasm in recent months; in the remaining pages there are some further choice samples. Notice Mr. Arvin's inability to decide whether he wants More to keep to "truly aesthetic judgements" and "high and fine disinterestedness", or to respond in a different manner to the aching aspirations of the muddled young men; a confusion that enables him to beat More with the jargon of both the esthetic school of criticism and the liberal-radical school; and a confusion which you will still find in nearly every anti-humanist pronouncement.

When next he came to write about More, Mr. Arvin had outgrown the childishness of this kind of criticism. He was by no means a convert to More's views in reviewing *The Demon of the Absolute* (*The New Student*, April, 1929), but he was able to differ with him calmly and even to present a fair exposition of More's meaning. He had become aware of the importance of More's defence of traditions and standards: "His insight into such necessary truths as these is what makes Mr. More, along with Irving Babbitt, a critic who has done more for our generation than a small army of Menckens could possibly have done". Babbitt seems never to have had the maddening effect on him that More did; as early as 1924 he was saying of Babbitt (when reviewing *Democracy and Leadership* in the Springfield *Republican*): "His attack, based as it is on first principles, is of the most cogent sort, and if it is to be met, must be met on very fundamental grounds. Fortunately Mr. Babbitt's philosophy has the merit

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of perfect dialectic integrity, and stands or falls quite definitely according as one admits or denies its central dogmas". Of the humanists in general he said in 1928 (reviewing Norman Foerster's *American Criticism*, *Herald Tribune*, June 17): "To something very deep in the mental life of our generation this systematic attack on romanticism makes a powerful appeal. Away from the sophistries of impressionism, the ineptitudes of the escape philosophy, the cult of spontaneity and self-exploitation, Mr. Foerster and the humanists call us to a critical method based on reasoned values, to a preference of conflict over escape, to a cult of intellectual discipline and ethical realism. It is a call that will be answered more and more generally as time goes on".

Now this attitude on Mr. Arvin's part, of considerable appreciation from a basis of ultimate opposition, joined to his high abilities as a clear, forceful and orderly writer, ought to make him what every proponent of humanism eagerly desires: an adequate enemy, one to whom it would be worth making a considered and serious reply. I sincerely hope that Mr. Arvin will not let his review of *Humanism and America* (*New Freeman*, March 28) be his last pronouncement on the subject. It seems to me to fall far short of what he could do if he really set about examining the first principles and central dogmas of humanism from his point of view; and certainly to fall short of the kind of criticism that will either enlighten the humanists about themselves or provide them with an occasion to illustrate their position by way of reply. Mr. Arvin's critique suffered from two main weaknesses: an extreme vagueness at the very points that demand concreteness; and from the fact, which was a surprising revelation, that he has not yet understood some of the principal humanist tenets. He also lapsed regrettably in several spots from his manner of 1929 to his manner of 1921; but I daresay this was due to contagion from the anti-humanist spring drive, rather than, as in the case of Lewis Mumford, to generosity toward the humanists, when they were down, turning to fury when they were in the limelight.

Mr. Arvin's arraignment of humanism is drastic enough in outline: humanism is based, he says, on a false conception of nature, of society, of the individual, and of art. As to nature, he objects to the humanists' insistence on a division between nature and human nature, as merely "a survival of the pre-scientific dualism between the natural and the supernatural". But he immediately adds, "One may not deny that there are many 'specifically human' values", quite as though the humanists' dualism were not simply a way of affirming certain of those values and certain solutions for those problems. To have meaning, any quarrel with the humanists here, after admitting specifically human qualities, would have to offer concrete objections to where they draw the line and to how they describe the qualities. Mr. Arvin merely says that the humanists "insist that these [qualities] are to be discussed outside the natural context", which begs the question and is too vague for reply. His assertion that this undefined procedure "encourages a peculiarly obstinate obscurantism" throws less light on his meaning than on his feelings.

The only concrete point in which Mr. Arvin attempts to differ with the humanist conception of human nature is in regard to the individual, and it is here that his misreading of crucial passages is most apparent. "Human nature, it says, has its roots in the natural and therefore in the evil; the whole duty of man is to exercise the veto power over his natural impulses in the interests of his only possible happiness, spiritual calm or serenity." Now of course this crude Manichaeism and ingrown ethics, which Mr. Arvin intends not as a burlesque but as a straightforward exposition, is far from the humanist meaning, so that there is no need to deal with his solemn refutation—which is

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yet not so effective as one might think such easy game would permit. But what he affirms instead may be worth noting: "It is the exercise of natural powers and natural susceptibilities, not their repression, that makes men happy; and discipline has ethical meaning only because it is indispensable to that end". Now plainly Mr. Arvin is using the word "natural" uncritically; is in fact trying to score by taking advantage of the circumstance that "natural" sometimes means "below the human" and sometimes "the normally human". In his first clause, he has without warning switched from the first use, which is the ordinary humanist use, to the second, with the result that the antithesis intended by the rest of his sentence fails to come off. For of course discipline is "natural" in the sense in which he is using the word, and he and the humanists are agreed. Mr. Arvin is only at the beginning of his inquiry, not the end. Which natural powers should be disciplined by which other natural powers? And to what standards? Mr. Arvin does not say. He merely says: "The temperamentally timid and self-distrustful instinctively envisage happiness in terms that suggest quiet and fixity; and humanism makes its appeal chiefly to such temperaments". Has he really changed his opinion so much from the time when he described the humanists as raucous, splenetic, vituperative, febrile, etc.? A more likely explanation is the anti-humanist motto: Any stigma will do to beat a dogma.

In his objection to the humanist conception of society Mr. Arvin is so vague that I am unable to present it. His feeling that the humanists are led by a "pre-industrial type of social thinking" to "rationalize regression in a peculiarly obtuse and obstructive way" becomes intelligible in the light of the information conveyed by the new *Who's Who* that Mr. Arvin is a socialist; but in his article there is too little definite statement to take hold of. As to art, his complaint is that humanism "furnishes no criterion for distinguishing, say, between fiction that is morally sound—but mediocre, and fiction that is imaginatively great". Does Mr. Arvin want a rule of thumb, or does he want a score of books in which the distinction is painstakingly elaborated in relation to most of the great writers? To say "Mr. More's literary essays are full of moral judgments, but his literary standards seem never to go beyond the classical demand for order, balance, decorum and probability", is to have read the "Shelburne Essays" with patches on both eyes. It is to be hoped not only that Mr. Arvin will attempt to refute the humanist first principles and central dogmas on a large scale, but that before doing so he will stretch his imaginative sympathies to the utmost and read the literature of humanism with greater care and understanding than he so far has.

Mr. Arvin's review of *Humanism and America* was one of the best that appeared. Perhaps I should say at this point that the purpose of this article prevents my dealing with the highly significant favorable reviews which the book received from critics scattered around the country who are outside the current literary atmosphere and able to appreciate the importance of the book and the trend that it registered. And it would be inaccurate to leave the impression that all the unfavorable reviews were inadequate. Mr. Donald Davidson, for instance—in spite of the personal reasons for animus against the humanists noted in July—wrote a notably fair review (in the *Nashville Tennesseean*), commending the negative aspect of the humanists' work and pointing out accurately that their real test would lie in their ability to reach the general reader. His own plea was for less attention to the "top" of the social structure and more attention to the "bases", meaning the economic structure. Quite apart from the all-important but easily overlooked fact that a society gets the economic conditions that its philosophy and religion deserve, Mr. Davidson's solution would seem to be still more difficult to make

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appeal to the general reader than that of the humanists. Like Allen Tate, John Crowe Ransom, and others of the important trans-Appalachian group, Mr. Davidson is aware of the shallowness of the bulk of the anti-humanist writings, saying of the fustian with which Walter Lippmann concluded his attack: "In other words, Mr. Lippmann answers the humanists with Y.M.C.A. phrases. If ever statement deserved the impolite rebuttal of a horse-laugh, this one of his does".

The most fair and painstaking attempt to present the contents of *Humanism and America* was the work of the astute Robert Rogers, in his magazine *Creative Reading*. Professor Rogers's comments showed him to be opposed to humanism, but nevertheless a bull as to its future in the literary market, as in this passage: "I must admit that humanism has a good chance of winning the next round. It may well be that the younger radicals on our college faculties, on our literary journals, and in our classrooms will soon be struggling humanists, and that we conservatives, the elder brethren, will be left fighting a losing fight under that banner of late nineteenth-century orthodoxy that bears the names of Huxley and Hardy. . . . If I were advising a young college teacher or critic on the make I think I would advise him to go humanist".

The *New Republic* was a little late in getting into the anti-humanist campaign, but quickly made up for lost time and before long had surpassed all rivals both in quantity and in lack of quality. In handling *Humanism and America* the *New Republic* critics made the job very easy for themselves, by the simple device of writing about the book as though they had not read it. Lewis Mumford, for instance, who provided the principal review, referred to nothing beyond the jacket and the preface. I do not mean that he would have liked the book better if he had given it the most detailed scrutiny imaginable. On the contrary, all his words on the humanists show that he is destined by temperament and mentality to detest them and all that they stand for forever, and to detest them with greater violence the more there are of them and the more they make themselves evident. His review was the fitting conclusion to the series of reactions to the humanists that has been noted in these articles, the generosity tempered by scorn of 1927 turning to open hostility in 1928 when the younger humanists showed signs of life, and this in turn yielding at the bare announcement of a manifesto to ungoverned rage satisfied to express itself not in argument but in a squeal (*New Republic*, March 26).

Edmund Wilson made no pretence of reviewing *Humanism and America*, undertaking to discuss only the chapters by Babbitt and More (*New Republic*, March 19). But if he thus escaped the charge of shirking the responsibilities of a reviewer, he incurred the far graver charge of shirking the responsibilities of a critic. What he did, in effect, was to write a savage attack on two of the most eminent of his contemporaries without having bothered to acquire adequate information about them, even such information as would result from a simple reading of their work. This I assert not from any private knowledge, but from the unmistakable evidence in his words, particularly in the article under discussion, that his familiarity with the men he was attacking was fragmentary to non-existence. His previous writing on the subject—two paragraphs on More in 1925, without a single allusion or quotation, and altogether vague and irrelevant—could not have been based on a reading of more than a few essays, possibly a book; say most of *A New England Group and Others* and some of *Aristocracy and Justice*. The evidence indicates that he had in the meantime read little or nothing further of More's, and had forgotten what he had read six or eight years before. As to Babbitt, it is clear that Wilson had never read a word of his (except possibly an article or two) until he sat down to disembowel Babbitt's chapter in *Human-*

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ism and America. During the year before, Wilson's occasional slighting reference to More had begun to be amplified by adding "and Babbitt", but for all the familiarity with Babbitt's work revealed, Wilson might have been writing about a single individual with one of those double Spanish names.

The above, or something like it—added to his temperamental bias and a mass of misconceptions—was the total preparation that Wilson brought to the work of demolishing More and Babbitt. The result was what might have been expected—or rather it was even worse than might have been expected. It is difficult to pin oneself to a superlative among the rich array of choices presented in recent months, but I am inclined to think that of all the anti-humanist exhibitions, Edmund Wilson's was the most disgraceful. It is the one, I think, which will be remembered as an indelible blot on its author's record when the other silly and petty and nasty performances have been forgotten or atoned for. It is doubtful, indeed, whether American literature had ever before seen so shocking an example of pure malevolence supported by ignorance in essential matters, by blundering obtuseness, and by complete abdication of conscience both personal and professional.

Wilson's method of procedure was typical of the mood in which he wrote. It consisted of reading through the two essays looking for passages that particularly annoyed him or seemed particularly vulnerable, lifting two or three sentences out of their context, glowering at each one in wrath until a sufficient quantity of black thoughts and savage phrases had accumulated—a procedure immensely aided by the fact that he had in several cases totally missed the meaning—and finally spewing forth from several hundred to a thousand words of bile, nonsense, and personal abuse. Now when a man does that —and I shall undertake to establish that my description is quite accurate—he has not, of course, accomplished anything remotely resembling criticism: he has merely made a shameful spectacle of himself. He has also, to be sure, done something else: he has made it difficult to answer him within reasonable space; such elaborate wrong-headedness and misrepresentation can hardly be unsnarled in the course of an article already over-long.

There is still another thing which Wilson's method accomplishes, as I imagine many who saw his article are saying at this point: it makes him not worth replying to. If our criticism were in a healthy state it would be sufficient to let such a performance as Wilson's make its way to heaven in the wake of its own odor. But in criticism as we have it in this country, Wilson not only goes unrebuked, even by sharers of his views who might be expected to know that he has damaged their side, but is universally and ecstatically applauded. His reputation has been increased. That portentous reputation! It has grown until Wilson is almost everywhere regarded as at once the Aristides, the Solon, and the Pericles of our literary world. All the warring schools of criticism unite in admiring him, and indeed, if nothing else, he must be granted great representative value. He combines in himself most of the main currents in our post-war literature. He has the inveterate anti-respectability and the brashness of the bohemians, he takes his philosophy and his view of American life from the boys with a usable past, and still his main preoccupation lies in the field of esthetics. It might be urged, to be sure, that he lacks the bohemian's gift for vaudeville, the seriousness and penetration of the libertarian sociologists and the creative ability of the esthetes. Nevertheless, when all is said, he is probably, God help us, the nearest approach to an all-round man of letters that his generation can show.

Ordinarily these three main groups in our criticism are inclined to be scornful of one another. You will find the sociologist scorned by the bohemians for being grim and messianic, and by the esthetes for being too

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earthy and unliterary; you will find the esthetes scorned by the bohemians for being precious and silly, and by the sociologists for being aloof when there is work to be done fixing up industrialism; you will find the bohemians scorned by the sociologists and esthetes for being *vieux jeu*, superficial, and childish.—I, for one, am inclined to agree with nearly all of these divergent criticisms. —But there are two matters on which all these parties, along with the various mixtures and the independents, are united: in their unlimited love for Edmund Wilson and their unlimited hatred for humanism. When Wilson provided an article which allowed them to indulge both of these passions at once, the jubilation reached the stars.

It will have to suffice to illustrate Wilson's methods by means of only one of his eight demolitions of bits picked out of the symposium essays of More and Babbitt; with a brief glance at the others. Even this much cannot be done in a few words; it is almost incredible the number of confusions and absurdities which one single sentence of Babbitt's was able to inspire in Wilson, and which Wilson was able to pack into his eight-hundred-word rebuttal. The example I have chosen is the first one in Wilson's article, and the one which has been most applauded by his devotees. It is also doubtless the section of which Wilson himself was proudest. In it his aim—and his accomplishment, according to the well-nigh universal opinion—was to assail the humanists on their own chosen territory, the field of the classical literature of Greece, and to expose them as incompetents and ignoramuses. According to Lewis Mumford, the humanists confuse "an aptitude for classical philology with that fierce sense of life which has created the great classics"; but Wilson sought to show that their classical philology is as defective as their understanding of the true spirit of the literature.

The sentence of Babbitt's which served Wilson as the point of departure for his exposure occurs near the beginning of Babbitt's essay in *Humanism and America*, "Humanism: An Essay at Definition". Babbitt is discussing the central problem of humanistic or balanced living, that of preserving an adjustment "between the variable and the permanent elements in human nature". He points out that most men "tend to substitute outer conformity for genuine adjustment", and that the particular code of behavior in which this vital adjustment becomes formulated at any one period is bound to include elements that are merely local and relative. This fact leads the imperceptive to raise two objections to a plea for creating humanist standards in a time of chaos like the present. One group insists that the results of all such attempts in the past have been *entirely* local and relative, and hence not worth striving for. The other group, identifying standards with a particular scheme of values which they feel is no longer acceptable, insists that a humanistic endeavor is merely an "anachronism" or an "escape" into the past. Replying to this second line of objection, Babbitt wrote:

"But humanism is not to be identified with this or that body of traditional precepts. The law of measure on which it depends becomes meaningless unless it can be shown to be one of the 'laws unwritten in the heavens' of which Antigone had the immediate perception, laws that are 'not of today or yesterday', that transcend in short the temporal process. The final appeal of the humanist is not to any historical convention but to intuition".

His meaning is obvious. The law of measure, the rule of "Nothing too much", which is the supreme method of achieving adjustment between the conflicting claims of human nature, is not dependent on the particular form in which it may be represented at any one period: it is ultimately above special conventions and open to the immediate perception of insight. Babbitt illustrates his meaning by an allusion to the manner in which Sophocles (*continued on page 209*)

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FICTION

THE STREET OF THE ISLANDS *by Stark Young* (SCRIBNER'S, $2.50)

ONE of the journalists, John Chamberlain, who wrote *The Critique of Humanism* thinks that the chief fault of the humanists has been "their failure to deal with the late twenties"; he assures us that recent fiction rises to new heights of excellence, that it represents life "in terms that are much less naïve than the terms of Anderson, Cabell, the Hergesheimer of *Cytherea*, and the writers of documents that are undertaken with the simple idea of photography". Among those who are to lead Israel out of bondage Mr. Stark Young appears as one of the shining hopes. Thus encouraged, I have read his *The Street of the Islands*, composed of what might loosely be called a half-dozen short stories and a half-dozen sketches, in quest of this new and "less naïve" outlook, this art which transcends "photography".

Certainly this book *does* transcend current fiction in some respects, notably as regards matters of taste, decorum, volition and restraint. In an era which has confused imaginative verity with the literal transcription of the ugliest aspects of contemporary life, it is a pleasure to read such a story as "The Harp Player", with its devotion to "what is decent . . . what is becoming, what is clean and proper in its aspect, respectful toward life, fitting. One is ruled by this decency, because taste is the last, fine morality of the mind and is the soul of the conscience". Mr. Young knows, by his beauty and "decorum, that the harp player is good", enjoying "a health of the spirit, a simple, sweet wholesomeness of being and heart". If he thus agrees in the main with Emerson (and Plato) that beauty is the mark of virtue, that esthetics are inseparable from ethics, he also agrees as to free will. "Campo Santo", the story of a bride whose lover is shot because he is discovered to be a bandit, dwells upon her serenity and exaltation inspired by Michael Angelo's high faith that what counts is not "my destiny nor fate" but rather the spirit, the will, with which one confronts life. "The Light on the Hills" cites an anecdote to illustrate the idea that, dark though the lot of one individual may be, "in the general sum of it, life evens up". And in an era whose fiction has glorified a defiance of all restraint and obligation it is a delight to read so finely executed a story as "The Land of Juan de Dios", which deals with a mother who finds her long lost son just as he is about to deprive his peons of their ancestral land and to alienate his young wife through his greed for gold and silver. After the mother has persuaded her son to exercise restraint, to recognize his obligations, she dies dreaming how "Plato said that there is a law that the paths of darkness beneath the earth shall never again be trodden by those who have set their feet on the heavenward road of love". Certainly all this is refreshing after the distorted and ugly fiction inspired by the "two movements", according to the late Professor V. L. Parrington, "that cradled the young intellectuals of the last generation—concern at the social maladjustments resulting from the Industrial Revolution, and the encroachment of a mechanistic determinism upon the conception of evolutionary progress, with all telelogical assumptions put away".

However, encouraging as these doctrines of Mr. Young are, they are mainly peripheral

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to his central doctrine, which seems to me very far from new, very far from being "less naïve" than the main current of thought from the youthful Wordsworth through Keats, Shelley, Browning and Pater to the scented souls of Pre-Raphaelitism and modern imagism. In its main trend, with the exceptions noted above, *The Street of the Islands* represents not the dawn of anything new but rather the twilight glow of the old naturalism. Let me illustrate. Just as the youthful Wordsworth saw God, man, and nature as "interfused", saw nothing changeless above the ever-changing "language of the sense", so Mr. Young, as a naturalistic monist, says that for the Assisi Farmer "the idea and the body, or creation, appear as one, in the same way as that in which the progress and life in nature there around him may relieve and express itself in the ripening grain, the flowers, the fruit, and the evening light under the trees". Just as Keats, who likewise yearned for "a life of sensations rather than of thought", fell a prey to the inevitable "weariness, the fever, and the fret" of transience, so Mr. Young's Senorita Rafaela exclaims, "life goes by us like a stream, as the river goes by Cordova", and Rex, the "voluptuous mystic" who wrote "naked with a gilt-brown crown on his head", sees "life as a flux. Something on the whole pathetic, something set in darkness. Filled with little bodies of men who were confused, warm-hearted, transitory, and touching". The merging of everything in sensation, resulting in the obsession of transience, usually leads to a sort of hysterical attempt to make the most of passing sensation. Just as Keats longed to "burst Joy's grape against his palate fine", just as Pater resolved that "while all melts under our feet, we may well grasp at any exquisite passion . . . gathering all we are into one desperate effort to see and touch", so more than one of Mr. Young's characters are "filled with passionate hunger and thirst, a kind of miracle of desire", as illustrated in "The Passionate Road". Maria Carmen runs away from the luxurious home of her betrothed to live as a vagabond with a bull-fighter. Finally, worn out with hardships, she bears his child on a "straw mat spread over the mud floor" and dies in glorified agony, saying, "I'd do it again". Another character finds a thief a "delicious creature"—"A good thief you might stand, I'd certainly love him with his big hauls more than I could love one of your small mean grafters". We recall, however, that this romantic glorification of intensity, regardless of ethical quality, was the theme of Browning's *The Statue and the Bust*:

> ". . . the sin I impute to each frustrate ghost
> Is—the unlit lamp and the ungirt loin,
> Though the end in sight was a vice, I say."

And just as Shelley, oscillating between ecstasy and despair, marvelled "why man has such a scope for . . . despondency and hope", so Mr. Young's finest character finds "not happiness so much as the rapture and pain at the core of life".

I can fancy someone interrupting, "Well, suppose Mr. Young is not a great philosopher. What in Heaven's name has that to do with the quality of his art?" And I should answer that, given Mr. Young's native talent, his philosophy in no small measure conditions both the strength and the weakness of his art. For the passionate devotion to the world of the senses leads naturally to a sharpened and refreshed sensuous perception, and hence in literature to vivid imagery, to a warmth and richness of sense-appeal, and to a variety as infinite as nature's own. Since the sensation loved is forever passing, the sensationist is likely to depend upon "emotion recollected", upon a mood of retrospective revery. And Mr. Young is most himself, apparently, while listening to music at twilight and "being carried on in a flood of life, sad as memory, full, plaintive, dreamlike and happy". The climax of the last story is the revery induced by a friend's chance remark: "I had tears in

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my eyes as I heard again in my mind what the young man had told me: in his childhood, hearing the Litany, said with the Rosary in Latin, in that deep tropical evening". However, if the strength of Mr. Young and his school lies in vividness of imagery and the exquisite harmony of atmosphere and mood, their weakness, conditioned by their naturalistic outlook, would seem to be their indifference to sustained form, to architectonics, and to the legitimate function of words. With the exception of the first story, the narratives of the book are in varying degrees loose in structure and the sketches seem abortive, if not indicative of a habit of exalting the part above the whole. No one can deny, however, that in parts Mr. Young has achieved unusual beauty:

> Doña Remedios . . . saw only the quiet shadowed gallery, the shining of the sun on the courtyard with its oleanders, jasmines and yucca plants, the immaculate space of the whitewashed walls quivering under the light of the sky, which stretched overhead, blue and spotless, without a cloud, only the light freshness of the breeze from the south. The cicadas had come, in the trees and the grass, with their dry shrill song, as if summer were at hand. There was a smell of cedarwood burning in the kitchen and the soft heavy fragrance of the jasmine and oleander in the sun.

Now if one reflects upon this passage, which embodies the essence of Mr. Young's peculiarly haunting beauty, he will notice, I think, that, fundamentally, the author is here competing with a modern "sound picture" in technicolor—a tendency to which Keats was addicted as well as the pictorial Pre-Raphaelites, a tendency whose perils Lessing exposed a century and a half ago. The question is whether, after all, the word-painter, limited to presenting a succession of images in temporal succession, can compete with the true painter, whose spatial medium and actual color present vivid images simultaneously and in instant perspective. At best, isn't word-painting a mongrel art?

I hope that I have not been unappreciative of Mr. Young's distinctive gifts and his divergence from the realists and determinists. I do not see, however, that *The Street of the Island*, considered as representing our latest fiction, should cause a humanist to revise his essential judgment of modern fiction, since, as I have endeavored to suggest, it is mainly compounded of naturalistic elements at least a century old. And, since the weakness of modern fiction is conditioned by its fundamental philosophic assumptions, I do not see how it can be greatly improved until these assumptions are more thoroughly reconsidered.

THE DANCE OF YOUTH *by Hermann Sudermann* (LIVERIGHT. $2.50)

As AN illustration of the quality of art and wisdom which is the harvest of a great naturalist's ripe old age, *The Dance of Youth*, by the late seventy-one-year-old Hermann Sudermann, whom a competent critic has called "one of the greatest, if not the greatest, of Germany's living writers", commands unusual interest. Surely one may best measure a movement by what its champions have achieved, not in the heat and inexperience of youth but in the quietude of age, drawing upon a lifetime of apprenticeship to art, of experience, and of contemplation.

In contrast to Sudermann's earlier novels *The Dance of Youth* lacks even the elemental qualities and the epic sensationalism which enabled him to capitalize the vogue of Rousseau, Schiller, Hugo and Nietzsche. It tends rather toward the callow, the commonplace, and the tawdry. Stripped of its lyric embroidery, the plot is hackneyed: Sixteen-year-old Stumpy, who with her gigolo brother's help becomes the mistress—"what a glorious word!"—of a dentist, rejects Gerberding, a sort of butter-and-egg man from the Argentine, and wins the idealist Fritz when the latter is enabled to pay off the mortgage on the old homestead with money Stumpy's

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brother obtains from his wife, whom he married "simply as a matter of calculation". With the possible exception of Fritz, who is finally convinced of his "old-fashioned" errors, in ethics and in emotional and spiritual depth the characters resemble rabbits—and they are almost as interesting.

The cardinal weakness of the novel is the absence of a "sound representation" of the nature of social liberty, a weakness common to most "radical" novels. Both Stumpy and her sister Gudrun have proclaimed an absolute liberty to "live one's life", to "try out all things". In Sudermann's ardent acceptance of this doctrine, however, he is apparently oblivious of the comical dilemma faced by his own characters. For when Stumpy discovers her own lover's keys in Gudrun's bag and realizes that her sister also has "freedom to come and go when she pleases", she exclaims, "Honour, justice, trust, love—shattered!" In other words the glorious gospel of absolute liberty is tenable only as long as no one else practises the same gospel in our neighborhood.

Furthermore, the book is typical of its class not only in its unsound notions of liberty but in its undercurrent of sub-rational fatalism. Stumpy, whose experiences "passed without leaving a trace" upon her spirit, realizes repeatedly that "she had been placidly allowing others to decide her fate"; she knew "how small a part she herself was to play in the shaping of that destiny". Even Fritz once wrote that "we must henceforth march along the roads prescribed for us by fate". And Elinor, the gigolo's bride, who pretends to have "a vampire's longing to drain life's cup to the dregs", merely "idles away her time, waiting upon destiny". It is thus no wonder, since the spineless characters tend to be victims rather than shapers of circumstance, that one looks in vain for dramatic or heroically beautiful conflicts.

I am reluctant, however, to take leave of this genius whose artistic power has been short-circuited by a false philosophy without reminding the reader that some of the elements we have found wanting in *The Dance of Life* gave vigor and beauty to such of his own early dramas as *Das Glück im Winkel* (*The Vale of Content*). I refer to the presence here of an inner conflict in the heroine between appetite and aspiration and to her firm reliance not upon fate but upon her own will. Her would-be seducer says she "seems a madonna, and often there lurks inside her something or other like a bacchante". She confesses, "In me all was still on fire—every nerve still. . . . I was full to the brim of longing". Yet "there is in my nature something of moral earnestness that, if toyed with, brings nothing but misery". After the stirring conflict which only such a view of life can give, she says "I've chosen my fate myself . . . it was my own free will". And the play ends with her husband's reflection that "perhaps in every one there was once a whole hell of such hopes and desires. . . . And who knows but then (after self-conquest) there'll be once more some happiness in this old nook of ours". If *The Vale of Content* is essentially a sound representation of the path to peace, *The Dance of Life* is "a piece that passes understanding".

HARRY HAYDEN CLARK

ANGEL PAVEMENT *by J. B. Priestley* (HARPERS. $3.00)

THOSE who expect from Mr. Priestley another such splendid fairy tale as *The Good Companions* will probably be disappointed; but it is only fair to Mr. Priestley to point out that what he is doing now seems to be more important, even if it is not altogether successful. When we come to examine them more closely, the characters in his earlier book appear to be nothing more than types, types that have no existence outside the imagination, and—for this is the whole point—not the author's imagination alone but that of almost every Englishman who is capable of reading a novel. They received a delighted recognition simply because Mr. Priestley had

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identified himself with what one might call the pleasant beliefs of the vast majority of his countrymen. In other words he had written a fairy tale for people who have no use for the supernatural, as such, in their daily lives; and a fairy tale so well written and so well disguised with realities as *The Good Companions* will always have an appeal outside the nation for whose pleasure it was first conceived.

There is a vast difference between *Angel Pavement* and its predecessor, a difference between fairy tale and novel. Movement, ultimately, is what makes a success of *The Good Companions*—the sequence of adventures, a sequence that showed Mr. Priestley to have a touch of genius and which gave his characters a vitality that they never possessed in themselves. This movement has nothing to do with construction, since it is spontaneous rather than deliberate. Construction is the distinguishing feature of *Angel Pavement*; a deliberate building up of adventure (Mr. Priestley's incident is always a little adventurous) to give the fullest point to a central theme—and that central theme is the emergence of each person in the book from type to individuality, under the influence of the only man in the book who is from beginning to end an individual, original, and independent being. This is the plot: a certain Golspie, an adventurer, comes to London with veneer and inlays to sell from Russia twice as cheaply as any that could be bought in England. He finds a stagnant firm in Angel Pavement, in the heart of the City, and to everyone in the firm from the head to the junior clerk he brings fortune and a new vitality. The novel takes these people back to their old life and their old background, again and again; to their old amusements and their old preoccupations; but always with something added—some keener interest, some personal dissatisfaction. In the end he cheats them, leaves them bankrupt and hopeless, but somehow they have all become individuals, unable and unwilling to creep back into the type they once represented. Now since Golspie, the one person who owes nothing at all to Mr. Priestley's knowledge or recognition of the general public in himself, dictates the fortunes and eventually the characters of everyone else in the book, since the core of the book lies in the conflict between him and them, and since this conflict is stated by the careful relating and minute recording of various incidents in the lives of four separate people, it is obvious that Mr. Priestley is doing something altogether different from and more difficult than *The Good Companions*. And if we say that the novel is not wholly successful it is because it is not perfectly constructed: the spontaneous and the deliberate are often "at odds together which is which": and therefore some of the incidents are out of place, some over elaborate, and some improbable. Those who told Mr. Priestley that he was a great novelist will now have the pleasure of observing his attempt to become one.

Possibly he has bitten off more than he can chew, but this is written with too much charm and vitality to be anything but a good book. Its picture of London citizens is true to type, and its picture of London—a sustained picture of what everyone who knows that most various and variable of cities will immediately recognize out of his own experience—is another proof of the author's ability to identify himself with the vision and imagination of ordinary men—not dishonestly, by trying to discover something that they will like, but by honestly realizing that what they do like is in itself a very good thing if only somebody would have the grace, the courage, and the power to express it. In this Mr. Priestley is quite alone. There are many more important novelists in England than he; but he alone has given a vast public full measure, pressed down and running over, has pleased in a simple manner all sorts and conditions of men, and left them a little better for having been pleased.

GEORGE DANGERFIELD

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THE SON AVENGER *by Sigrid Undset* (KNOPF. $3.00)

WITH this volume the tetralogy of thirteenth-century Norway, "The Master of Hestviken", is completed, and Olav Audunsson ends his troubled life. The volume does not stand alone, and without having read the preceding books, one would make little of it. That is to say that the four volumes form a unified novel of some thirteen hundred pages.

Now that sensible as well as sensitive readers are speaking of Sigrid Undset as a great novelist, it is well to note that mere length has a marked esthetic effect. In the average short novel characterization may be excellent, but our contact with the people is too brief to make a memorable impression on us. Characterization may be no finer, individual incidents no better told, in the long novel; but long acquaintance breeds a deeper sense of familiarity and a more powerful emotional reaction towards the characters, which the reader is prone to explain as a greater power of realism in the author. This effect may be noted in novels as diverse as *Middlemarch, Anna Karenina*, and even *An American Tragedy*. It is to be noted in the work of Sigrid Undset. If the average American novelist begins to realize its possibilities we may have once again a fleet of "three-deckers".

But the Norwegian novelist's excellence does not lie merely in length. Her treatment of the Middle Ages is notable. With her, life in the thirteenth century is not a series of picturesque scenes, an opportunity for romanticizing or displaying antiquarian lore; it is so thoroughly a part of her mind that it has become a part of her experience like her own life. In other words, she uses, she does not exploit, the Middle Ages. She is a realist using a past century for her setting, as another uses a far-away land. Her realism, again, is not an exploitation of details, but a quiet, fluent adaptation of them to the needs of her story. Descriptions there are continually; but so naturally are they introduced, so vivid are they in themselves, and so inevitably do they harmonize with the emotional experiences of the characters, that they form a background of natural beauty without obtrusion. The concrete particulars of medieval life—smoke in the ill-vented log houses, cold and wet, hunting and strife, unquestioning faith in the church and ignoring of its precepts under temptation, a rigid and harsh social structure, fleeting joys and long troubles, drudgery, sickness, filth, insanity, and bloodshed—all are there, without the slightest concealment, but also without the slightest overemphasis. We are not led to say, How miserable and dirty an animal is man! The misery and dirt are never so important for this novelist as is the erring but aspiring inner life of her people. And we, as readers, feel that in placing her emphasis there she achieves an undistorted picture of mankind.

It is the inner life which interests her, and in particular the religious life of men and women burdened by sin. The unifying theme that runs throughout this tetralogy is the homicide which Olav commits in *The Axe*, and conceals with agony until in his old age he finds strength to confess. It was not, according to medieval standards, a particularly evil deed, for by it he avenged his honor and that of his betrothed; but it was not confessed, and Olav had an unusually sensitive and brooding conscience. It was committed, moreover, in an age of absolute faith, in which heaven and hell were realities. Never by the slightest hint does the author step outside the point of view of the age, to let us see it in the perspective of modern scepticism and science; we cannot guess her own feeling about her hero. But in spite of that, or possibly because of it, her Olav becomes puzzling, like men in life, a mixture of nobility and harshness, a doer of heroic sacrifices and a petty tyrant, a thirster after righteousness who will not humble his pride. The novel is primarily psychological;

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at times, as in *The Wilderness*, wearisomely introspective; at times, as in the climaxes, when violent action breaks the dams of pent emotion, tremendously powerful.

But her strength is also a limitation. Her Norse introspectiveness and brooding sense of doom preclude the wider range, the lighter, more picturesque treatment, the pageantry and color and humor that an actual medieval like Chaucer gives us. Her world is for the most part bounded by Hestviken, the homestead on the fiord. Olav's voyage to England in *The Wilderness* is an unusual and pleasant broadening of the horizon. Otherwise we travel only a few miles from the ancestral home. And we see only the middle class of small landholders, little or nothing of the great and of the very poor. The Church we see much, but only as it affects this middle class; and incursions of warfare and violence only occasionally disturb the primitive provinciality of the people. But for all that there is an amplitude, an insight, and sense of human dignity in the picture that justify our admiration for an artist of unusual power.

MIRTHFUL HAVEN *by Booth Tarkington* (DOUBLEDAY, DORAN. $2.00)

We must remember with gratitude the Booth Tarkington who as romancer cut that polished gem, *Monsieur Beaucaire;* who as realist made that sensitive and unsentimentalized study of a girl, *Alice Adams;* who wrote, after Mark Twain, our best boy stories. We must recall his gift for accurate and at the same time humorous and sympathetic characterization of American types—a gift shared by too few of our serious novelists. We must remember, for this novel will do little to remind us. Starting and continuing in the manner of "light summer reading", it suddenly ends after a fashion surely disappointing to the lover of young romance, but without the tragic or ironic power to appeal to anyone else.

ALAN REYNOLDS THOMPSON

MISS MOLE *by E. H. Young* (HARCOURT, BRACE. $2.00)

It is a pleasure to have an opportunity to write a review of a book by so skilled a craftsman, so perceptive, understanding, and disciplined a writer, in short, so fine a novelist as E. H. Young. If none of her succeeding books seems to have quite attained to the nearly absolute perfection of *William*, every one of them hovers close to the mark which Miss Young has set for herself.

Miss Young writes of provincial England and, in each of her novels, centers the action about a small group of quiet, obscure people who belong to the class of gentlefolk in moderate circumstances which supplies the seasoning, the natural flavor, of English life. In the story which she builds on this setting she never fails to rise, effortlessly, to a true dramatic intensity. And the drama emerges always through her luminous and exquisite interpretation of character under the shadow of unrolling events.

Miss Mole, always excepting the immemorial *William*, is, perhaps, the best of her novels. I say "perhaps" because it may be that my judgment is affected by the fact that it is the latest one. It is sufficient to say that it is on a level with the others. In the figure of the title character, an impoverished spinster, a gentlewoman who, under a modestly plain exterior, fails to conceal her quiet, ironic wit, her imaginative courage, her English love of the beautiful in nature, Miss Young has drawn another of her rare and extraordinarily real characters.

Miss Mole finds her job cut out for her when she accepts the position of housekeeper for Mr. Corder, the Nonconformist minister, who rules his household with but little more wisdom in the management of his two diversely unhappy daughters, his handsome nephew and his rebellious son, than the braying jackass whom he so closely resembles. Miss Mole has a secret in her past which she knows must eventually come to light. But

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she achieves an approach to order in the lives of the people of this household before her sin succeeds in finding her out; by which time she has succeeded in doing a great deal for herself. It is in the little touches of humor, of keen observation, of beauty of description, of penetration into the secret places of human lives that the books of E. H. Young owe their special value. As Scott wrote Jane Austen, there are many novelists who can do the big bow-wow successfully. No one of her contemporaries quite equals Miss Young in the peculiar and important sphere, quiet and limited, where her genius lies.

THE SENTIMENTAL VAGABOND *by A. T'Serstevens* (FARRAR & RINEHART. $2.00)

BACCIO CARDI, youthful doctor of history, having engaged with his publishers to do his *Index of the Ancient Italian Nobility* and having received his advance royalties, sets forth on his wanderings up and down his beloved Italy, visiting libraries and consulting archives; and, because he is a sentimentalist in love with the very name of love, his work remains neglected while he pursues, shyly, his dreams of fair women. In a strange manner he meets and loves the impalpable Erigone. Fortunately he finds a loyal and able friend in Salvatore Palumbo, the bell-ringer born to vagabondage, the jack of all trades. Salvatore carries the ever growing manuscript in the pack on his broad back and shields the gentle Baccio from misfortune and worry while he works on his book, thinks of his lost Erigone, and dreams of love. This light, charming story, full of Latin eroticism delicately played upon and spiced with bits of Gallic wit and humor, affords a pleasant excursion into a world compounded of the literary, the imaginative, and the picaresque. Almost anyone who still has a capacity for illusion should find entertainment in it.

FRED T. MARSH

FLOWERING JUDAS *by Katherine Anne Porter* (HARCOURT, BRACE. $2.50)

THIS book is made up of six remarkable stories, from one of which the title is taken. All are exquisitely done, with feeling for dramatic values, with clarity, with delicate delineation of characters, and in language transcendently beautiful. The stories differ so widely in setting and theme as to constitute convincing evidence of Katherine Anne Porter's versatility. Several of Miss Porter's characters are simply unforgettable.

"Maria Concepción," the first story in the collection and the longest, deals with an Indian girl's love and stark vengeance. There are the rakish Juan Villegas, beloved of two women, the ruthless Maria Concepción, who marches fearlessly toward her goal, and the gay and pathetic little Maria Rosa, whose happy year was ended by the knife of Maria Concepción. "Magic" is a slight but poignant tale told by a former servant in a fancy house as she is dressing the hair of her new mistress. "Rope" is an amusing account of a domestic wrangle which had neither logical beginning nor logical end—an interlude that might have been taken from the life of any married couple. The story is told dramatically and effectively by means of indirect discourse. "He" is a gripping story motivated by a mixture of pride and mother-love which cannot be disentangled. It is the most tragic and dramatic tale in the collection. Mrs. Whipple stands in bold relief against her background of poverty and squalor, always endeavoring to put her best foot foremost, always defeated, always afraid that the finger of scorn will be pointed at her poor defective son, and finally loving the boy so utterly that pride is drowned in the onrushing flood of her misery.

"The Jilting of Granny Weatherall" is sheer perfection in short story writing. All of the old woman's life is telescoped into the last brief moment when her children wait with her for the coming of death. This story and

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"Flowering Judas", with which the collection is concluded, are elusive, lyrically beautiful bits of writing, so exquisitely wrought as to leave the reader haunted by a memory of loveliness. Perhaps six short stories do not offer substantial proof of the existence of genius, but they would indicate that the career of Katherine Anne Porter is worth watching.

EUDORA RAMSAY RICHARDSON

TALES TOLD BY SIMPSON *by May Sinclair* (MACMILLAN. $2.00)

THE thirteen tales that Simpson tells are concerned principally with the upper-class side of artistic life in London. They provide us with a remarkable portrait of Simpson; indeed this fashionable painter grows so vivid in the course of his narration that he becomes the very symbol of all that is smug and insensitive in English art. If Miss Sinclair had intended this effect she would have had an extraordinary success to her credit. Unfortunately, however, with each new tale her veil of objectivity falls lower and lower, until she herself is merged with her creation. It becomes impossible at last to distinguish between the author and the hero.

Miss Sinclair is well schooled in the art of story-telling; moreover, she knows what a good story consists of. It is by reason of this latter knowledge, in her ambition not to fail to write what will be "significant", that she is frequently led to tell stories which contain strong material indeed. How then, handicapped by her lack of feeling and her burden of maintaining the traditional *sang-froid* demanded by her code of manners, does she handle her strong material? By the equally traditional device of understatement. In this way she hopes to escape her obligation as an artist to feel. In the name of English art, appropriately employing in the studio a patter which comes from the club, she has erected a monument to precisely those national characteristics which are least esthetic.

GERALD SYKES

CECILE *by F. L. Lucas* (HOLT. $2.50)

PERHAPS because of that delicately nuanced sunset glow which always accompanies a dying culture, the reign of Louis XVI will never cease to charm those eunuchs of the scholarly and literary worlds, the writers of period novels. Perhaps also because only a more masculine hand—that of a Dickens or a Hugo—can do justice to the reign of terror which inevitably ensues.

Mr. F. L. Lucas, however, who has the rare luck of being both a scholar and *littérateur*, has succeeded admirably in creating living characters to animate his faithful reconstruction of eighteenth-century French life. If *Cécile* were a play, one could not but pronounce it beautifully acted and exquisitely staged. Plunged into the midst of Parisian and rural society of the year 1775 with its Encyclopedic enlightenment, Voltairian deism, and Rousseauistic sentimentality, the reader's interest centers upon the emotional problems of the two sisters Andrée and Cécile. The former, grave and intellectual, revenges her adored and idealistic husband's unfaithfulness by taking an English lover (why should the quite natural presence of Dick Elliot remind one of those old curricula announcements: "with especial reference to the cultural relations of France and England during the eighteenth century"?); while Cécile, the younger and gayer, escapes her husband's tedious love in a series of light affairs for which she is ultimately punished by a *lettre de cachet*. The author has wisely avoided as much as possible the introduction of historical characters, satisfying himself rather with modelling his protagonists upon familiar and easily recognizable figures. In addition to a profound knowledge of the history and literature of the period, Mr. Lucas's extraordinary gift for delightful persiflage contributes not a little towards making this novel almost as Parisian and as "*dix-huitième*" in spirit as *Manon Lescaut* is in fact.

JUSTIN O'BRIEN

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MR. GUMBLE SITS UP *by Douglas Durkin* (LIVERIGHT. $2.00)

SOMETHING of the calm attitude worn by the Philosophers in *The Crock of Gold* sits upon Mr. Gumble, of this story, like a weight, keeping him from doing the expected, and leavening his unreason with the semblance of sanity. Yet the reader knows all along that Mr. Gumble is not sane. Or perhaps it is merely that Mr. Gumble has been dead, and never having been in that state, the reader cannot judge the actions of one who has been. On the other hand, the author presumably has not been dead either; so how can he write convincingly of Mr. Gumble? The answer is that he cannot. Just what he is driving at through all this fantasy is hard to say. The reader never knows if Mr. Gumble, who sat up in his coffin and then proceeded on his way as a whole man, was really dead and came to life, or if the doctor who pronounced him deceased was mistaken. Whichever it was, Gumble considers that he was dead once, and thus not fearing death again, takes joyous and magnificant risk with his life, meeting death once more, with slightly different results.

There is in the account a certain amount of humor, but it is as vague as Mr. Gumble's post-mortem existence. It never attains that delightful foolery of the Philosophers' dissertations, yet the flavor is there, to tantalize with its inadaquacy. Various people reading the book will attempt to draw this and that inference from it, succeeding in accord with their own imaginations. The practical soul will be faintly amused and vastly puzzled.

MYRA M. WATERMAN

A NOTE IN MUSIC *by Rosamond Lehmann* (HOLT. $2.50)

THERE was once a group of vacillating people. Frustration weighed heavily upon them like an albatross of the spirit, and ennui had set them by the heels. There was Norah whom the war had rather defrauded, and Gerald, her unsocial, difficult husband. There was Grace, a strapping ungainly woman in middle life, whose husband Tom was golf-minded and mediocre, and Pansy, a girl of the town, who manicured by day and solicited by twilight.

Into their midst came Hugh, a beautiful and vaguely aphrodisiac young man who, quite unconscious of the sheep's eyes cast his way by the matrons and the trollop, concerned himself with a dogged and hopeless devotion for one Oliver, an Oxford esthete of dubious qualifications. With Hugh came his sister Clare, a sophisticated divorcee, who duplicated in the male bosoms the flutter Hugh inspired in the feminine dovecotes.

Nothing very terrific or important happened. The ladies yearned mightily after the gentleman, and the gentlemen flirted outrageously with the lady.

It is a far cry from the romantic striplings of *Dusty Answer* to the aging Lotharios of the present work. But this second novel logically complements the first in that it repeats the burthen with appropriate variations. The burning youthful question, "What of this life?", is again enunciated, albeit in the querulous tone of one who is more certain than ever that she will not be answered.

It is an unhappy book, full of unhappy people. Miss Lehmann's new characters approach love and life with the air of poor relations at a feast. Though hungry, they do not expect much, and they are charily served.

DOCTOR SEROCOLD *by Helen Ashton* (DOUBLEDAY, DORAN. $2.50)

THOUGH today's triumph be tomorrow's pulpwood, it is not in nature for a reviewer to be fearful of enthusiasms. The journals of past, respected decades are populous with names that have gone without hope of resurrection into the disused and dingy limbo of a library file. Reviewed and reviewers alike are lapped in dust. Yet I surmise for Helen Ash-

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ton's book a somewhat happier destiny, if only because it is a first-rate novel with first-rate and unusual subject matter. It details twenty-four hours in the life of an old-fashioned though young-spirited doctor, commencing at half-past two in the morning with the death of his friend and fellow-practitioner Doctor Gaunt, and ending long after midnight with a birth. Suspecting himself to be a victim of cancer, the Doctor gently watches his old partner out of the world, while his thoughts re-create their work together.

Encouraging, coaxing, bullying on occasion, Doctor Serocold makes his round, dropping into the homes of patients, working in the hospital theatre (where he performs a tricky, last-minute operation for mastoid), winning one's sympathy. It is this medical angle that affords the reader a new and stimulating experience. Throughout the day he is preoccupied with the fate of his friends, all of whom are hastening graveward, and with the similar early dissolution which he anticipates for himself. This dry pensiveness on a theme from Koheleth commences with the death motif struck in the first chapter, and continues to the last when the Doctor's problem is answered.

He has administered the anesthetic to the confined woman, and sits by the bedside, a little drowsy and confused:

"I've seen four generations today, wandering around; seen the whole of my life again, in a way. The lot that was here before me are dropping off now like falling leaves, and my own generation is running dry . . . there's not much more to be expected of us. And the generation in between are dead and buried. . . .

"But there's a new lot coming up to take our places, and not such a bad lot either. Here comes the last of the procession . . . a lively little beggar in spite of everything . . .

"If only they wouldn't keep one out of bed till such unconscionable hours. . . ."

LEO KENNEDY

SAINT JOHNSON *by W. R. Burnett* (DIAL PRESS. $2.00)

IT IS a fashionable literary truism that even the wariest reader is often a willing victim of a tale in the well-fed tradition of hero versus villain with virtue emerging triumphant. Once equipped with this formula, a facile author has little else to do save construct a spectacular array of space-filling incidents against a moviesque background, with the added attraction of so-called realistic dialogue. But sometimes the cleverest journalese novelist oversteps himself. The simplicity of the pattern is deceptive. W. R. Burnett had the dubious fortune to stumble upon remarkably fertile and provocative material, and made the dismal mistake of trying to follow the familiar formula. Naturally the reader is justified in objecting to the sight of a potentially fascinating story being effectively strangled with the best-selling fingers of pathos, suspense, local color, and a sort of subdued theatricalism in style.

Wayt Johnson, his spartan brother Luther, and Brant White, a conventionally suave gambler of the early eighties in lawless Arizona, take upon themselves the dangerous and unsuccessful duty of impressing moral order upon a town controlled by cattle rustlers and knavish politicians. Wayt is known among the law-abiding element as "Law and Order Johnson", although the less puristic and more eloquent characters speak of him as "that long-legged, disconnected, Kansas son-of-a-bitch, Saint Johnson". Out of the thin thread of Johnson's experiences as officer in a barbaric mining camp, the author has endeavored to weave the strong fabric of a competent novel. His finished product is uneven and disappointing.

Founded upon authentic sources, *Saint Johnson* pretends to be an epic of the old frontier days, a vibrantly reminiscent story of the hard-riding, quick-shooting American southwest of fifty years ago. Nor has Mr. Burnett been niggardly in the use of local

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color. It is all there: the drunkenness, the lawlessness, the stage robbery, the garishly inviting brothels, the faro games in the Golden Girl Saloon, and the inevitable "quiet desert beyond".

Nevertheless, despite Mr. Burnett's undeniably veracious data, notwithstanding his masterly use of pathos and suspense, irrespective of his gaunt, iron-jawed he-men, this book is by no means the stirring recital of derring-do it might have been. The formula is too old, too hackneyed. The polychromatic setting and monocromatic characters recall the heyday of the penny dreadful. A novelized portrait of those outlaw years should contain something other than a series of gun fights and a group of death defiant sinners and saints. Mr. Burnett's reach exceeds his grasp. In trying to write an exciting narrative he has sacrificed plausibility to melodrama: we see the strings behind the puppets and the show is spoiled.

WILLIAM J. FADIMAN

SOME TRUST IN CHARIOTS *by Fiswoode Tarleton* (DIAL PRESS. $2.00)

AT THE start *Some Trust in Chariots* moves sluggishly, cumbersome with a top-heavy load of people and events; and for long its ultimate direction is not certain. At one point the novel seems about to resolve itself into the sterile portrayal of a struggle between two blind forces, an institution and the spirit of a recalcitrant people. But gradually two dominant characters emerge and the struggle becomes a conflict between these two, who are presented as individuals and not merely as opposing types. The end of the clash between them is the crystallization of a conscience and the refinement of a spirit, the conscience and spirit of a man and only indirectly of a people.

The novel's action is placed in the Southern mountains, a background which has proved a pitfall for writers less serious and more sentimental. Mr. Tarleton depicts the mountain people earnestly and with comprehension of their basic faults and virtues. His people have an impressive actuality, Mr. Tarleton has the good sense to let his main characters rise free from the background and to develop as individual human beings; so his novel is innocent of crass exploitation of an interesting locality.

The great sincerity and the marks of genuine ability evident in this book are admirable. The novel is not first rate: it drags and is frequently clumsy, at times obscure in the relation of events. Yet its theme, once it comes clear, is a high one and its principal characters not lacking in nobility. *Some Trust in Chariots* is worth reading.

EUGENE ARMFIELD

THE WINGS OF ADVENTURE *by Sir Philip Gibbs* (DOUBLEDAY, DORAN. $1.00)

IN HIS second volume of "little novels" Sir Philip Gibbs presents an unusually even collection of stories, varied in locale and subject matter, all written on the same note of idealism or sentiment, yet never verging on sentimentality. If Mr. Gibbs's style is more that of a journalist and his little novels lack the close-knit structure one is accustomed to find in the American short story, he has more than balanced this by the qualities of reality and humanness which characterize them. They are like episodes gathered from a rich and varied experience and recounted informally for a group of friends. Because of the author's experience as a war correspondent the reader is most interested in those stories which have the war as their background. Perhaps the outstanding story in this collection is that of the monk, released from his vows for the duration of the war to become a sergeant of Chasseurs in the service of France, who falls in love on his first Paris leave. It is a poignant story, told with delicacy and understanding. "The Wings of Adventure", which gives the book its title, is a vivid account of a titled Englishwoman who finds life in post-

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war England futile and meaningless after the excitement of driving an ambulance under fire, and takes up aviation. Interesting for its psychological implications is the story of the Austrian scientist who discovered the secret of rejuvenation in "The Key of Life". "The Lover of Her Dreams", a story of Queen Victoria's time, and "The Dragoman of Cairo" are the least fortunate selections in the book. The others are striking, sympathetic portraits which linger in the memory long after reading. While this is not an outstanding volume, it is well above the average collections of stories by a single author.

ELIZABETH DOSSER

EVERY MOTHER'S SON *by Norman Lindsay* (COSMOPOLITAN. $2.00)

NORMAN LINDSAY, the author of this book, is the most celebrated of contemporary Australian artists. A recent exhibition of his drawings at the Leicester Galleries in London drew forth conflicting storms of praise and terrific abuse. Some of the "protective societies", after minutely lingering over Mr. Lindsay's sprawling nymphs and satyrs, demanded that the doors of the Gallery be bolted and barred. But the pictures remained unmolested, and they and their creator continued to be warmly discussed from Bloomsbury to Chelsea. Remembering this, it is not necessary to gasp at the extremely ambiguous nature of *Every Mother's Son*, Mr. Lindsay's novel. The book strikes out and hits between the eyes. Stripped down it is the story of the stiff-backed parson's daughter being too indolent to deny the warm attentions of the equally young and indolent son of a certain Mr. and Mrs. Piper. It will be argued there is nothing particularly racial about that. It might have happened, and undoubtedly does happen, almost anywhere. But it is customary to think of Australia in more or less agricultural terms, whereas it is reasonable to suppose that there are numbers of people out there in that enormous land beyond the setting sun whose minds and bodies are not solely entangled with cattle-feed and the like.

The Pipers have another bright offspring, their youngest daughter Ethel. This Ethel is an outrageous but highly diverting girl who casually thieves somebody-or-other's husband, and eventually lands her own sister's beau. In all these carryings-on Ethel is aided and abetted and applauded by her author. With one of his characters Mr. Lindsay has been less successful. He yields to the temptation of making Mr. Bandparts, young Piper's tutor, a mouthpiece for his own thoughts and reflections, thus devitalizing an engaging personality. Mr. Bandparts is quite tedious, but in Ethel Mr. Lindsay has created a surprising and electric young person. One wonders what on earth will become of her and whether one will be permitted to find out.

ANTONY CLARK

SHRIMPS FOR TEA *by Josephine Blumenfeld* (DOUBLEDAY, DORAN. $2.00)

A LINE on the jacket of this collection of gossamer tales suggests that here is to be discovered another Katherine Mansfield. This is unfortunate, for once that name has been projected before a reader it is difficult for him to banish from his memory K. M.'s "The Garden Party" or "Bliss". In their light, other short stories seem to perish.

Miss Blumenfeld's work, light as it is, deserves to be judged on its own. It is sensitive and well etched. What is missing is the terrific knowledge so delicately played with in all of Katherine Mansfield's writing; a lack, however, that any young author may cure by growing a little older. Incident is here, and character. The next job is to deepen the interplay of one upon the other and so reach the hidden pulse. Meanwhile, there is a certain relief in hearing amid the clamor of a raucous world, so fresh, so mannered and so promising a voice.

LYNN ANDERSON

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THE CONQUEROR'S LADY: INES SUAREZ *by Stella Burke May* (FARRAR & RINEHART. $4.00)

INES SUAREZ was an heroic figure in an heroic period when women had hardly any existence outside of the home. She was the only woman who marched with the Conquistadors and who took part in battles against the Indians of South America when Spain's far-flung and bloody conquest was under way. And she was the mistress of Pedro de Valdivia, the conqueror of Chile.

All this was four hundred years ago; and quite properly Mrs. May's story begins shortly after the death of Columbus, the man whose findings in the Western world had stirred the men of Spain to fabulous enterprise.

Ines Suarez had also been stirred; and she had seen the face of Pedro de Valdivia twice. She set out to the New World as the wife of a soldier, for in no other way could she have obtained permission to go, and arrived a widow, beloved of the men of the expedition, who deemed her their "guardian angel".

Mrs. May's book reveals all of the advantages and many of the shortcomings of novelized biography. The advantages are obvious. Lacking specific information about certain periods in the life of one of the characters, one may manufacture it out of the whole cloth, if necessary, with fair chances of credulity in the end. To the student of biography and history this is undoubtedly a disappointing procedure. He misses documentation, and specific references to specific sources. He sees sentimentality creep in, and simplicity and exciting truth exchanged for romanticizing, fabricating and coloring. This may be no valid charge against a novelist, but it should constitute one against the biographical writer. Mrs. May's book, nevertheless, makes excellent reading. She has given us a novel of spirited adventure embellished with purple patches of fact. She has portrayed her chief character with real admiration for her personality and deeds, and reveals a wide knowledge of the period about which she has chosen to write.

CHARLES NORMAN

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BIOGRAPHY

PORTRAIT OF A DIPLOMATIST *by Harold Nicolson* (HOUGHTON MIFFLIN. $5.00)

MR. NICOLSON'S object is "to trace in terms of an individual experience and of a single personality, those recondite displacements of weight, prejudice and sympathy, which, between the year 1870 and the year 1914, produced the European War". This book, then, is not only a portrait of the author's father, Sir Arthur Nicolson, twelfth baronet and first Lord Carnock, but also a study of the origins of the Great War. Both formally, however, and by intention, the latter is subordinated to the former, and the book, while it is a brilliant piece of analysis and interpretation, is also a very good biography, and good because imaginative, and imaginative because clearly distinguishable from what is documentary on the one hand and fanciful on the other.

In the first place the author does not merely recapitulate the most relevant facts in the most significant order; he *uses* these facts, he suffuses them with imagination, he makes them live: and in the second place he refuses to allow his prejudice or speculation to intrude upon, color and distort the personality he is presenting. Such detachment—such essentially austere detachment—is a rare event in any case; from an author of the Bloomsbury persuasion, some of whose earlier work was clearly indebted to Mr. Strachey, it is not only a rare event, it is an astonishing one.

What is this single personality and this individual experience in terms of which we are to examine the origins of the Great War? The first is contained in one sentence: "Arthur Nicolson was neither imaginative nor intellectual: he was merely intelligent, honest, sensible, high-minded and fair". The second begins in Peking and ends with the Ambassadorship at St. Petersburg and the Permanent Under Secretaryship at the Foreign Office. And through it Nicolson moved away from a belief in the mid-Victorian "splendid isolation" toward a belief in the German Menace, in the possibilities and perils of a German hegemony in Europe. It was a movement which culminated in the *Einkreisungspolitik*, that policy which was so misinterpreted and so open to misinterpretation, and which impelled both England and Germany to their mutual destruction in 1914; and this movement is minutely charted step by step with the shifts and changes, the jealousies and fears, the conferences and conversations, and all the overt and secret actions of every chancellery in Europe. It is a brilliant piece of reconstruction, the work of a trained mind and an acute intelligence; it shows once again that to lay the responsibility of the war upon one nation is destructive nonsense; it shows what the essential goodness of Nicolson had to contend with in his own education and in that of his colleagues and opponents; and it shows with what curious mixture of honesty and dishonesty, tactfulness and brutality, duty and self-interest, the bestarred and beribboned diplomacy of an older Europe prepared the way for the slaughter of ten million men.

The portrait of diplomacy, however, is dependent upon the portrait of the diplomatist, and the study of the origins of war upon both. Mr. Nicolson's intention is biographical, and he has written an admirable biography—he has achieved the exceedingly difficult task of giving a private meaning to the public life of a public man. In an age of acute

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biographical sickness this is an eminently healthy book; it shows how far and to what good purpose its author has travelled from the position he occupied in *Some People*. For if Mr. Strachey as biographer is the Gamaliel of Bloomsbury, Mr. Nicolson no longer sits at his feet. Mr. Nicolson is now a distinguished and independent writer.

GEORGE DANGERFIELD

MOLIERE *by John Palmer* (BREWER & WARREN. $5.00)

THE life of Jean Poquelin, better known to the world as Molière, was in itself an ironic comedy. From the moment when, at the age of twenty-one, he left his father's house and the reversion of his father's lucrative and respectable office as *tapissier ordinaire* to the King of France to follow the red-haired Madeleine Béjart and her disreputable company of strolling players, there was a quality in his career which approached high comedy. Molière failed at classic tragedy—tragedy as it was bellowed by Montfleury at the Hôtel de Bourgogne—to become the great comic genius of the modern world. He derided rank and pretension and hypocrisy and all the airs and trappings of the social world, to become the idol of the French theatre and the favorite of the king. He obtained from life nearly everything that he had not striven for. He died playing the part of Argan in *Le Malade imaginaire*, which he had written during his last illness to mock the preoccupation of a healthy man with disease and death. But the biographer who attempts to read in Molière's plays the comedy of his life, or to trace from them the truth concerning his personal affairs, is foredoomed to disappointment.

Molière was a comedian because he appealed to the common sense of his auditors, rather than to their emotions. And he was always able to apply to his personal life the same cool, intellectual detachment which he brought to his art. The translation of his private experience into the material of the theatre is a process too subtle for the biographer to follow. Mr. Palmer has wisely not attempted it. The story of Molière's life presented here is entirely separate from the story of his work. In undertaking this study, Mr. Palmer was confronted by a veritable embarrassment of riches. The mass of anecdote and conjecture and scandal which surrounded Molière at every stage of his career has been industriously elaborated for three hundred years. Much of Mr. Palmer's weighty volume is devoted to clearing away historical and biographical rubbish in search of a not inconsiderable kernel of truth. He has dealt carefully and conscientiously with the controversial issues of Molière's life; and he has brought to his essentially scholarly labor a fine quality of imagination which enables him brilliantly to reconstruct its social background.

The book is satisfactory biography, but it is even more valuable as criticism. Mr. Palmer, a dramatic critic and a successor of Bernard Shaw and Max Beerbohm on the staff of the *Saturday Review*, has applied to his estimate of Molière an indispensable technical knowledge of the theatre. The only faults to be charged against his work result directly, and perhaps inevitably, from the method adopted. It may be accounted dull by the general reader because of the length and patience of its research. It may seem, as a narrative, to be difficult and disjointed because the mass of critical and historical material which Mr. Palmer has included all but defied organization. But it is hard to see, in view of the magnitude of his task, how it could have been better performed.

THE LIFE OF CHINGIS-KHAN *by B. Ya. Vladimirtsov* (HOUGHTON MIFFLIN. $2.50)

PROFESSOR VLADIMIRTSOV, a Russian authority on the history and language of Mongolia, has compiled an absorbing biography of the great Mongolian conqueror, Genghis-Khan, or, in

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the transliteration which he prefers, Chingis-Khan. The life of this nomadic ruler who brought under his single sceptre the civilizations of the Far and the Near East has been principally a matter of legend. The Mongolian sources of information concerning him, with the exception of an epic poem, *The Secret History of the Mongols*, have been lost; and the foreign sources, the works of Chinese, Persian, and Moslem historians, are based mainly upon traditional lore. To the serious scholar they present an enormous task in historical criticism.

Since Professor Vladimirtsov is writing in the service of historical truth, he has necessarily had to confine himself to rather broad outlines in his reconstruction of the life and personality of the great Khan. But in spite of the slenderness of the data admitted, he has given us an intelligible picture of Chingis, and one which bears little relation to the barbarous and blood-thirsty monster of legend. Chingis-Khan's faith in his high destiny, and his astuteness in impressing it upon his companions, his consistent belief in the principles of aristocracy, his positive military genius, his generosity, his shrewdness and caution, and, above all, his ability to conquer and make use of civilizations more advanced than his own, all form the portrait of a man whose personal greatness certainly equalled that of any of the giants of Western European history. Not the least important or interesting part of Vladimirtsov's biography is the picture he has constructed for us of Mongolian society in the twelfth century.

MRS. SIGOURNEY: THE SWEET SINGER OF HARTFORD *by Gordon S. Haight* (YALE. $3.00)

MR. HAIGHT admits in his foreword that he undertook this biography of Lydia Sigourney with the hope of finding among her poems "some few pieces that would establish her right to the reputation she enjoyed for half a century as America's leading poetess". He was forced, however, before he had gone through many of her forty-odd volumes, to conclude that posterity had judged fairly in denying her claim to immortality. In inquiring further for the sources of her apparently unfounded popularity, Mr. Haight has uncovered a very singular and amusing literary career—one which may be justly said to illuminate the period which produced it.

Mrs. Sigourney was the daughter of a penniless gardener, but she made excellent capital of her natural endowments—her humble antecedents, her rather slender personal charm, a somewhat bumptious eagerness for social recognition, a flair for the excessive and sugary sentimentality of the day, and a pretty, facile talent for the making of verses. She wrote at a rate which permitted little polishing, and she appended morals everywhere.

There is an irresistibly comic element in Lydia Sigourney's career, which Mr. Haight unobtrusively permits his reader to enjoy to the full. He never sins by emphasis or overstatement against the canons of scholarship or good taste. But it is hard to see how, dealing fairly with his material, he could have drawn a better or more delightful portrait of a woman who, lacking an interpreter of Mr. Haight's talent, must have been one of the dullest figures in American literary history.

MARGARET WALLACE

JONATHAN EDWARDS: THE FIERY PURITAN *by Henry Bamford Parkes* (MINTON, BALCH. $3.50)

THAT Jonathan Edwards was not in his authentic religious experience a Calvinist may be a shocking new idea to those who vaguely remember of him that he was, like the Mathers and other Colonial theocrats, merely a preacher of hell-fire and damnation. Mr. Parkes presents him in a new orientation; a short review cannot attempt even to suggest the doctrinal points, and the subtleties of character that research has found in old records. Mr. Parkes has done a very important thing in re-

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covering from many sources knowledge of Edwards's youth: his mystic experience, his love of nature (rare and original in those days), his belief in a benevolent God and a benevolent world—and the psychological and environmental changes that made him adopt the harsh Calvinistic doctrine, root and branch. Mr. Parkes's interpretation of his material is not always the inevitable, unquestionable one, but his opinion is always lively and interesting. He has been careful, too, to present the great Puritan in relation to his time; the almost pagan, peasant New England of that day is well shown; the village quarrels, that were so important in Edwards's environment, the sensational barn-storming evangelism of George Whitefield, the beginnings of Yale, the doctrinal quarrels and personal intrigues, all are interesting and important elements in the making of the Calvinist of "the Great Awakening" out of the romantic, God-intoxicated, gentle youth. Mr. Parkes has written his biography for the general reader, not for the historian or the theologian; as a consequence, it is much too general, and much too dogmatic in some of its generalities for complete acceptance. One wishes that the author had been more generous in quotation from sources, had respected scholarship somewhat more and the "new biography" somewhat less. But in spite of his salaams in the general direction of Guedalla, Ludwig, and the other magicians, Mr. Parkes has written a good biography of a much disputed personage, very important in our history.

MR. AND MRS. JOHN QUINCY ADAMS: AN ADVENTURE IN PATRIOTISM *by Dorothie Bobbé* (MINTON, BALCH. $3.50)

FEW families are worth the number of books that have been written about the Adamses. It is a strong witness of their genuine greatness and their worth to us in our generation that new books have been written, such as Mrs. Bobbé's *Abigail Adams*, James Truslow Adams's *The Adams Family*, Mrs. Bobbé's new work, *Mr. and Mrs. John Quincy Adams*, and that old ones, chiefly written by Adamses, are so constantly read.

Mr. and Mrs. John Quincy Adams is an important biography and history; the material is important at almost every point, important from the biographer's point of view, from that of the historian, or that of the student of American life, letters and thought. Mrs. Bobbé has treated her material with respect; she brings to her research and to her writing an intelligence that is nicely balanced. Her sense of proportion is good, her knowledge of the period is that of the scholar; she respects the Adams family, but she is not a hero-worshipper; she is an intelligent impartial critic; she is at great pains to unravel snarls—the snarls of political rope that have so long bound the figure of John Quincy Adams grotesquely. There are few biographies so stimulating, so necessary for an American to read. Mrs. Bobbé is interested in presenting John Quincy Adams as the tremendously interesting man he was; she has been wise, and almost inhumanly poised, in avoiding detraction of others—Jackson, for instance—who deliberately, unscrupulously, wrecked Adams's career and all that he stood for in American statesmanship.

A political life that began with the Battle of Bunker Hill and extended to 1848, through a considerable part of the anti-slavery struggle, a political life that embraced embassies to Russia and England in the time of Napoleon, the duties of Secretary of State under Monroe (Adams was chiefly responsible for the Monroe Doctrine), the Presidency, and twenty years as fighting, honest Congressman in a corrupt and savagely partisan House, is of extreme importance to students of American history and origins. Adams's life, superficially, was a life of excitement, drama, even melodrama; underneath his tremendous activity he lived a life no less exciting and dramatic intellectually, a life of deep, careful thought, of analysis and delib-

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eration. He was that rare thing in American politics, a genuine statesman; more than that, a tremendously courageous statesman.

Mrs. Bobbé has not found Mrs. John Quincy Adams so interesting a figure. That she was a lovely woman, intelligent and gifted, one remembers from *The Education of Henry Adams*—delicate, beautiful, an exotic in Quincy and in Washington, a remarkable hostess, Ambassador's lady and First Lady. Her devotion to her husband's life and interests, and to her family, presumably subtracted from her own expression. Whatever the reason, she was not so striking an intellectual figure as John Quincy's mother, Abigail. Mrs. Bobbé portrays the devotion of Louisa Catherine Adams to her husband and family; it is a pleasant and idyllic chapter in American history. There is one very dramatic adventure in Louisa Adam's record—a flight across Europe from Russia to Paris in a coach during the Hundred Days when all Europe was chaos. That she made the journey at all is evidence of her magnificent courage; that she lived to tell the tale is miraculous.

This book adds much to our understanding of a most interesting and significant family; the idealism and heroism and intelligence of John Quincy make him a figure almost sublime in its greatness, and it is encouraging to read of him so well understood. Mrs. Bobbé's writing is also proof, if one were again needed, that an author need not bow down before popular taste in order to write biography that is excitingly interesting.

COLEY TAYLOR

JOSEPHINE *by R. MacNair Wilson* (SCRIBNER'S. $5.00)

ANATOLE FRANCE once remarked that Time keeps nothing which Time itself has not created. The principle would seem especially applicable to literary forms such as the Strachey-school biography. Full psychological realization of an individual historical character is not a new thing in theory. It is a comparatively recent phenomenon in practice; so recent, indeed, that in the present volume, which is an attempt to trace Josephine's motives through a life of steadfast opportunism, one finds the major defects as well as the merits of the Strachey formula.

Josephine is presented from childhood onward as the prey of circumstances in which she finds no permanent victory or defeat. Her courage is that of a woman with strong appetites demanding satisfaction. Her resourcefulness is that of the adventuress who sees all things in flux and whose expectations are the measure of each succeeding situation. Josephine, the rebellious daughter of plantation owners in Martinique, later the philandering wife of Alexandre de Beauharnais, later still the tearful Empress whom Napoleon mentally distrusts and sentimentally cherishes, is no novel figure in literature. Her imperfections have long been exhibited by the hostile, as they have been veiled and softened by the friendly.

R. MacNair Wilson can scarcely be condemned on the score of excessive kindliness. His vision is partly an expression of his method, partly the result of a definite bias possessed by most northerners in dealing with Latin psychology. His analyses tend to discount all emotions, but more particularly those which explain charm in such a woman as Josephine, or passionate attachment in such a man as Napoleon. The book is none the less fascinating reading. The style is vivid, paradoxical, concise. The characters live. One feels their immediacy, their reality in the author's mind. The interplay of interests as between Josephine and her two husbands is projected against a larger and more dramatic theme, the conflict between the clan Beauharnais and the clan Buonaparte. This struggle is a long one. Its vicissitudes are those of Europe itself during more than a decade. That Josephine was conscious of the theatrical values embodied in her conduct and career, the biographer is at some pains to

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show. Her calculated weaknesses, her "gift for tears", her far-sighted treacheries (such as intriguing with Metternich when Napoleon seemed lost) are meant to illustrate a sinister preoccupation with self which should discredit her affected martyrdom. There is little left of womanly charm in the portrait laid upon these pages.

Skill has been used in the arrangement of evidence. The narrative is documented, and carries conviction regarding simple questions of fact. But interpretation is the key to biography as to other branches of *belles lettres*. Mr. Wilson's interpretation of Josephine is a worthy monument to the Strachey school of biographical technique.

LA FAYETTE *by Brand Whitlock* (APPLETON. TWO VOLS. $10.00)

THIS portrayal of the Marquis de La Fayette may well serve as a model for biographers seeking, on the one hand, to avoid the dulness of dry fact, and on the other, the absurdity and insignificance of romantic fantasy. The author presents no unverifiable conversations, no fanciful gestures, no forced characterization, yet, it is La Fayette himself who speaks constantly from these pages, whose mannerisms are vividly conveyed, whose romantic character as the Hero of Two Worlds is tested and re-tested before our eyes, until a Third World, as yet unseen, unknown, claims his restless spirit.

Rarely in modern historical writing has the Plutarchian insistence upon moral evaluation of motive and deed been so finely united with loyalty to demonstrable truth. The author's style seems to reflect prolonged absorption in Gallic culture. The lucidity, the flexibility and grace of the narrative might stir a Voltaire to envy. There is, perhaps, a certain ingenuousness in the complete surrender of the author to his subject. The hero is almost too perfect. One could wish that the writing showed more of the particular corrective quality so eminently lacking in La Fayette himself, a sense of humor. Theatrical attitudes, amazing programs, are an important element in the technique of most leaders in action. The need for critical reserve on the part of the biographer would appear to be proportionate to the dramatic uniqueness of the leader's character.

And, in this instance—What a leader!

A youth of nineteen, rich in culture as in prestige and material things, goes forth into the distant regions of the earth in pursuit of glory. He encounters obstacles on sea, on land, in politics, in war, and he meets them all with a bravery, a generous enthusiasm which destroys them, which unconsciously reacts upon him, which shapes his main purpose in life and forever identifies his name with ideals of liberty.

La Fayette's service to America as an aide to Washington, his vital influence in obtaining financial credits from France, his help in the actual re-establishment of peace—are a part of the American saga, and known to school children. It is the remainder of La Fayette's career which is now made adequately accessible to English readers. As a boy, as Washington's protégé, La Fayette became a great American. So long as he lived, and he lived long after those legendary days, he was also a great Frenchman, a born aristocrat enamoured of liberal institutions, a revolutionary statesman, a soldier. His rescue of the King and Queen from the mob at Versailles, his struggles for the Constitution, his resistance to the Terror, his martyrdom at Olmütz, his calm defiance of Empire and of Restoration alike, are items in an epic reaching in its effects far beyond the limits of his own country or of his own time.

Toward the very end of his adventurous sojourn among men, writing to a political friend, La Fayette spoke meditatively of himself: "The independence of my character yields to nothing but my own convictions. No obstacle, no disappointment, no grief can cause me to slacken or turn aside in pressing toward the goal of my life: the well-being

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of all, and of liberty everywhere". No reader of these volumes, so carefully, eagerly written, can doubt the truthfulness of this self-comment. Its apparent magniloquence is an integral portion of its truth. It should be noted, moreover, that the biography as a whole is so humanly wrought that La Fayette is by no means less lovable for being literal. On the contrary.

ARMAND BURKE

CROMWELL *by Eucardio Momigliano* (SCRIBNER'S. $3.50)

THE author of this biography of the man who, next to Shakespeare, is perhaps the most enigmatic of England's great figures of the modern era, is also the author, one learns through his bibliography, of *Francesco Bernardi, Friend of Cromwell*, published in Genoa last year. The reason why mention of of this earlier biography is pertinent to a discussion of the volume under consideration is that Mr. Momigliano has turned to Italian sources, more specifically to Genoese and Venetian diplomatic correspondence, for his opinions and final estimate of the character and policies of the Lord Protector. Bernardi was a legate or resident from Genoa who remained in London during the crucial years 1651 to 1665 and who seems to have been favored with the personal esteem and regard of Cromwell. In this connection it is well to recall that members of Cromwell's family had married into Italian families. In an appendix constituting nearly a third of the book the author has included a number of letters from Bernardi to his government, from the Venetian ambassador, Sangredo, to his government and several other Italian documents. Sangredo's report, read in the Venetian Senate, in which the course of English history and the career of Cromwell from the beginning of the Civil War are reviewed in detail, is the last and most striking of these. Much of this material, we are told, has never been used before.

For the general American reader this Italian biographer has written a fair account of Cromwell in relation to the historic events in which he was involved. He remains on the surface of Cromwell's mind and character. He touches but lightly on the non-political aspects of the troublesome religious question. And he avoids speculation about the little-known early life of his subject.

Momigliano stresses his contention that Cromwell looked for world dominion; that he was definitely planning to make himself Lord Protector of the whole Protestant world. His Italian diplomats seem to have believed this, and that there was a plot brewing against Catholic Europe. But they were quite naturally jumpy because of the profound secrecy in which Cromwell succeeded in veiling all his plans and diplomatic dickerings.

One surmises that the author's biography of Bernardi, that charming young legate from Genoa, hertofore lost to view in the mazes of history, would prove to be of more value to the historian than his *Cromwell*. Mr. Momigliano has unearthed any quantity of interesting material. The earlier volume should disclose a picture of Oliver and a view of the London of his day, taken from contemporary and foreign sources, of great value and interest.

FRED T. MARSH

QUEEN CAROLINE *by Sir Edward Parry* (SCRIBNER'S. $6.00)

CAROLINE, Queen of England, was a true daughter of the House of Brunswick. Her father, in command of the Prussian army, was killed at Jena; her brother, at Waterloo. The word surrender was not in their vocabulary and it was not in hers, and the British people, if not the Court, understood her and admired her for it. That she was a brilliant woman, or even a particularly intelligent one, was certainly not the case. Had she not been accused of adultery—and, Sir Edward Parry makes it clear, unjustly accused—she would

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have been just another spouse of an English king. It remained for George the Fourth by his Bill of Pains and Penalties to clinch at once his right to the title of "The First Blackguard of Europe" and to make his wife the darling of his people. Deserted by her husband for a series of mistresses, with the knowledge, or at least the suspicion, that he also already had a morganatic wife, it would not have been strange had Caroline yielded to some lover, but despite the fact that for years King George had her spied upon and spent thousands of pounds in bribing her servants to perjure themselves, the only evidence that even his sycophants in the House of Lords could bring themselves to consider was the fact that one hot night she had slept on the deck of a yacht under an awning, and that nearby her alleged lover was also sleeping! What her chief advocate, Henry Brougham, did to such evidence was a foregone conclusion. The only wonder is that the indignation of the British people did not make it impossible for George to remain on the throne. The House of Hanover had produced more than one ignoble sovereign of England, but never such a disgusting beast as the fourth of the Georges.

Sir Edward Parry has written a biography in which are all the facts. It is not written with charm, and in it there is a good deal of unnecessary repetition, but all is there for anyone who wants to know the essential points of this *cause célèbre*. There is also much interesting comment on the great political figures of the time, but it is odd that a member of the English bench should not have been able to marshal his material more dramatically than has Sir Edward Parry. He misses again and again perfectly legitimate effects, effects which would have greatly clarified the narrative and given greater life to the chief protagonists.

GRENVILLE VERNON

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POETRY

FIRE FOR THE NIGHT *by Babette Deutsch* (CAPE & SMITH. $2.00)

THIS is Miss Deutsch's third book of poems, and it has the maturity to be expected of a poet whose work has been familiar for more than a decade to all who read contemporary verse. Like all her work, it shows fine and swift intelligence coupled with extreme subtlety of emotion. Miss Deutsch is a poet whose thought is always at least as important as her feeling, and whose powers of expression are adequate to every task laid upon them by a personality of unusual range and intensity. A few of the fifteen sonnets entitled *Time and Spirit*, her Phi Beta Kappa poem read last year at Columbia University, have depth and power hardly to be matched in poetry written by women. The seventh and ninth of these, in particular, both of them remarkably rich in symbolism, attain a metaphysical profundity beyond which poetry can scarcely go.

From the first poem to the last in this volume Miss Deutsch's thought and mood are dominated and chilled by the bleak figure of Time. Evanescence in many aspects—loss of friendship, loss of love, waning of hope and ecstasy, fading of summer, and the constant ticking of that "travelling clock you carry everywhere about with you, the jewel of your bones",—darkens every beam of the sun with sure foreknowledge of the night. To combat Time, "the one unconquerable foe", she gathers about her, as we all do, such frail allies as lovers, friends, art, nature, and finally "this vapory naught . . . this soul". As we all do, she tightens her clutch upon "treasures of the sensual mesh", the sights and sounds, tastes and odors of which we feel comparatively sure but which are all the more fleeting because of their apparent certainty. All this is merely the familiar situation of one who loves his life rather more passionately than most do, and who therefore suffers the more as he sees it slipping and ebbing from him heart-beat by heart-beat, who hears the cricket's cry as a steady nibbling at the little span of hours left to him and every strain of music as a murmur of the vast stream making swiftly toward a vaster silence. Since the time of Sappho there has been nothing new in this theme, and it will never be old.

One would speak childishly in saying that Miss Deutsch has no care for this immedicable woe. Friends fail, and lovers; art fails, and even the soul, although Miss Deutsch does not explicitly admit this. Still there come moments of eternity in which we seem to escape from evanescence and to hear the rushing of time far off, like a distant river. What these moments mean no one has ever told us, but it is one of the higher purposes of art to give them at least a brief endurance in time. This is what Miss Deutsch has done again and again in the present book—especially in such recollections of comradeship as "Elegy for an Evening" and "To Certain Companions", which glow and throb with the "eternal thoughts of lovers brief". Thus she gathers fire, as we do, for the night.

AFTER-WALKER *by Leonard Cline* (VIKING. $2.00)

THE LAST poems we are likely to have from the pen of Leonard Cline, and all the poems of his that we are likely to remember, are in

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this volume. To those who have hitherto known him only as a novelist they will seem surprisingly good. They range in excellence all the way from creditable magazine verse up to an almost perfect poem of mystic vision called "Mass in the Valley" which hardly any one now living, unless it be Ralph Hodgson, could have written. Cline's strange audacious fancy, so evident in all his novels, plays like heat lightning throughout the book—always prodigal and unrestrained but always flashing out images that shine in memory. The book's positive merit is that it is alive. It has also several negative virtues: things that can be said clearly are always clearly said, and when the words seem to burst and scatter sparks they do so because unusual weights of thought or feeling are laid upon them; the restraints of strict verse form are accepted, triumphed over, made into a higher freedom; there is no adolescent bother about being "original," no special concern about being "modern". Leonard Cline had passed beyond experimentation and undue self-consciousness when he wrote most of these poems, so that he could give his entire attention to the main business of making poetry.

We may reasonably suppose that the title-poem, "After-Walker", is to be read as an imaginative record of Cline's own experience. It tells the story of one who, "wilfully having taken breath", is acquitted of the charge of murder yet feels that he has suffered the extreme and the just penalty, so that for the rest of his days he sees all life as though from beyond the grave. This poem, written shortly before Cline's death, is his most considerable effort in verse. In several ways it is deeper, more thoughtful, more terrible, than the "Ballad of Reading Gaol", recognizing as it does how hugely the moral law overarches all human codes. It is so much more powerful than any of the earlier poems in the book that one is left to wonder what heights Leonard Cline might have attained with a more favoring fate.

These poems are a fragmentary record of a stormy career, yet there emerges from them the image of a most vivid personality, of a mind inevitably distinguished which did not reach full fruition but yet somehow did attain, or retain, an inward peace. Cline knew the strain and distraction of modern life, but he did not let it invade his sanctuary. Like Bach, of whom he writes most discerningly, he sustained himself partly upon "beauty, that equally allays desire, despair"; but beyond and under that he had faith, and in the most essential respects he must have been true to it. Otherwise, how did it happen that out of the materials that make woe and madness in other lives he wrought—if these poems can be trusted—a quiet and sufficient joy? Strange as it may sound to some of those who knew him—as the present reviewer did not—he must have been in some deep sense a religiously minded man. There was something devout in him, but also there was something Corybantic, so that he must have been intensely lonely at times in the world of Puritans and infidels—lonely as his own Silenus, who could find no one to play with him:

I held my bottle firmly between my knees
And deplored the passing of Dionysus.
And I lamented that all the night
Was empty of flute music,
And that the songs one used to sing
In Istar's gardens at Babylon
Had now no voice to intone them.

But all that night I found no youth or maid
Would drink with me.
Did they hear me coming?
Ah, that the world should fear Silenus!

BEHIND DARK SPACES *by Melville Cane* (HARCOURT, BRACE. $2.00)

VIRTUOSITY develops as spontaneity declines, and it attains its greatest heights in response to an audience which has come to value a given art for its own sake. Mr. Cane writes for an audience—such as Paris has had for

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eighty years, London for forty, and New York for perhaps fifteen—that takes a refined and sophisticated pleasure in the pure virtuosity of verse. His technical proficiency is consummate, whether or not the things he does with it are always worth doing. He can capture the look and feeling of a ship's sway at sea or the feeling and look of mist in a city street and set these things before us with such sure and masterly strokes that our admiration of his skill overcomes the doubt whether he is using it worthily. His magic is entirely that of conscious art; he knows to a nicety the precise effect of every syllable he sets down, so that if he does not write poetry it is not for lack of knowing how. In reading this book one begins to think of Houdini before reaching the delightful poem addressed to that famous magician; and while one reads that poem and remembers Houdini one realizes that conscious art sometimes works magic of the higher sort. If Mr. Cane's twenty lines called "Engadine" are not poetry then there is no other single name to call them by. They are a shining fragment of perfection.

The main theme of these poems is light—light in eclipse or dimmed, and light triumphant—and this is treated with such skill as to show that if Mr. Cane had not been a poet he would have been a painter. Subordinate to this theme is that of the city. Mr. Cane is as metropolitan as Verlaine, and as modern as Debussy.

ODELL SHEPARD

DEEP SOUTH *by Carl Carmer* (FARRAR & RINEHART. $2.00)

IT IS difficult to understand why Mr. Carmer chose verse as a medium for narrating his stories of Southern mountaineers. Good verse, through the compression of form and through figures, imposes upon its material a wider, deeper significance than the material of *Deep South* in any way requires. In fine narrative poetry the characters are intensified, their emotions are clarified and rendered more immediate by the form, and events become more powerfully dramatic. The emotions and acts of the characters Mr. Carmer is describing are, from the standpoint of poetry that deals with broad an profound human emotion, trivial, because they never exceed the bounds of quaintness. Even if the material were not so bound down, it is doubtful if Mr. Carmer's verse could have lifted it. His lines have, on the whole, a clean, terse economy; yet they remain undistinguished and their rhythm, despite its regularity, lean and prosaic.

The suspicion arises that the best among these narratives, "Big Cove" or "Runaway", for example, would make interesting short stories. In comparison, Paul Green's story, "The Devil's Instrument", seems a more successful exploitation of so-called folk material. Yet the appeal these tales might have still remains limited to whatever interest is inherent in sharply drawn, realistic pictures of a highly specialized locality. Mr. Carmer has reproduced well enough the speech and customs of a picturesque section in the South, but, save for an occasional touch of pity, that is all.

THE IRON DISH *by Lynn Riggs* (DOUBLEDAY, DORAN. $2.00)

A BOOK of verse by Mr. Lynn Riggs is worth noticing if for no other reason than because he has been hailed far and wide as one of the most promising young playwrights. On reading the first two or three poems in the volume, one is struck by a curious resemblance, in tone at least, to the work of the late Adelaide Crapsey, an impression that is heightened by a similarity of form in the "Santo Domingo Corn Dance". As one reads further, this verse has more and more characteristics that have come to be associated with minor lady poets. There is the same pretty melancholy, the same array of birds and flowers, the same elegant slightness of form and content. Other literary reminiscences

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arise. Such phrases as "the color of dawn" recall the exquisite Albert Samain; and far too many of these poems are nothing but word painting in the manner of Théophile Gautier.

On the whole, the verses in *The Iron Dish* display an artistic feebleness like that in Mr. Riggs's play, *Roadside*. They have, however, a finish which *Roadside* lacks. Further, they are written with economy and a commendable lack of bombast. Occasionally, as in the first two stanzas of "The Gargantuan Flight", or in "Threnody for the Slain", there is an arresting figure or a poetically significant phrase. Certainly there is nothing objectionable in the volume. Neither is there any depth of thought or emotion. Mr. Riggs's poems remain, after much reading and reflection, precisely what they appeared at first —pleasant and well polished trifles.

EUGENE ARMFIELD

POEMS *by Peter Quennell* (CAPE & SMITH. $2.50)

THE most outstanding characteristic of Peter Quennell's verse is its lack of resemblance to the verses of T. S. Eliot on the one hand, or Hart Crane's on the other; or to the verses of any other present-day poet. This is an estimate by negation; but otherwise a statement of the quality of *Poems* can be made only in adjectives of excellence or originality. For the poems have a certain majesty of effect which can be pointed to, but hardly described.

In general, the success of the volume appears to come from the forms, rhythms, and the sureness of the figures. "Leviathan", for example, has a heavy-bodied humor obtained largely from the weight given by an appropriate metre and the accurately distributed balance of fantasy. The figures themselves, which have little variety, are rarely sensuous or merely descriptive; instead they seem to be the product of the poet's intellect, as if he not only saw or heard but knew he saw and heard and put both down without loss of either thought or sensation. The effect of Quennell's verse is, accordingly, not one of immediate tangibility, but rather of remote, intense contemplation of the pattern of emotions or objects. Marvell's "green thought in a green shade" is not in the least similar to any of the lines in *Poems*; but it has the same sources in the mind that many of Quennell's lines have, although pieces like "Hero Entombed" or "The Divers" are in no sense intellectual or metaphysical.

It is unfortunate that the structure of the verses is so often loosened by those machines of metaphor, "like" and "as". But this is a minor flaw and can be forgotten for the total effect of these remarkable poems.

KENNETH WHITE

THE PROOF *by Yvor Winters* (COWARD-MCCANN. $1.00)

BETWEEN the boards of this thin volume is represented something like the transition of American poetry in our generation: from a successful concentration upon the single image to an extension of the poetic province over the whole of human experience. Mr. Winters has already been known to us as one of the last and most authentic of the imagists. In certain poems earlier in the present collection—"Bisons", "Goatherds", "November"—he is still content to render sense-impressions with a hardness, economy and certitude which give to their expression a value almost absolute in itself. So triumphant, in fact, is his achievement within the purely literary discipline that it would be impossible for him to develop further if he did not happen to be an extremely ambitious poet. But both by temperament and by the pressure of his time Mr. Winters is compelled to go out in search of much bigger game than the single circumscribed image that occupied his immediate predecessors. His maturity as a poet coincides too closely with the moment when poets everywhere are discovering that

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the very life of their art depends on a more complete and ordered mastery of their universe. For the modern poet the task entailed is a creative reconstruction of the harmony between intellect and perception; and for a poet as acutely sensitized as Mr. Winters the task is more than ordinarily difficult. It would be inaccurate to claim that he has succeeded where so many others before him have escaped mysticism only to be trapped into one or another type of sterile dogmatism. At times his verse too disintegrates into a somewhat febrile mysticism; at times his habit of vatic utterance borders on the dogmatic. Intellect too often enters in the guise of a pompous abstract diction which merely serves to obfuscate the experience. Intellect is too often the murex which discolors the original clear perception. A conviction that classicism of form means emulation of models from the past is probably responsible for the misalliance of influences. Yet Mr. Winters is important despite his failure to express an intelligible personal synthesis. The proper view of him would be as a poet who creates on the level where the fusion between intellect and perception is in the process of being accomplished. The desperate tenacity with which he pursues his object lends the passion to his verse; the passion is responsible for the rare vitality of its style. "The mind alone is mind, and it must wait," Mr. Winters reminds us, in a statement that seems less cryptic if read as an apology for all that remains unachieved in his work to date. And again, in a ringing last line to the whole volume, "Nor is the mind in vain".

WILLIAM TROY

NEAR AND FAR *by Edmund Blunden* (HARPERS. $2.00)

ENGLISH critics have always been kind to Edmund Blunden, chiefly, one suspects, because there is nothing in Blunden to be afraid of. He has the appearance of being a good poet and he is safe. He is so safe that he has even managed to avoid too close a correspondence with those of his contemporaries who affect the title Georgian and the status of school, and have made quite a good business out of disguising the fact that they are nothing more than a clique. Blunden is, in fact, unaffectedly traditional. The sharp airs of this century have not treated his traditionalism too kindly; to be more precise, his traditionalism has been genuine enough to wilt, and not vigorous enough to thrive in them; and that is why he has only the appearance of being a good minor poet. His unquestioned importance in modern English poetry lies presumably in what he might be; or rather, since he is a mature poet, in what he might have been.

Near And Far is partly Japanese, partly war, and partly domestic. "Japanese Garland" contains the best poetry—the images clear, the verse musical, sensitive and quiet; his war poems are unexpectedly subtle; and his domestic generally insipid. All the way through, however, he affords an excellent example of "Bathos, or The Art of Sinking in Poetry", since no poet of his repute has such a capacity for composing indifferent lines. And this is due to the fact that the qualities of his poetry are widely speaking an eighteenth-century elegance and propriety —admirable qualities in any period, but carrying in them the seeds of a vicious tendency towards elegant and proper clichés, toward the suitable word in the right place instead of the right word in the right place. In respect of this, admitting exaggeration and risking impertinence, one might commend to Mr. Blunden's examination a couplet once directed against the vocabulary of certain eighteenth-century poets who pursued the shades of Milton into the cider harvest and the shearing:

The *feathery tribe* with *pinions* cleaves the air:
Not so the Mackerel, and still less the Bear.

GEORGE DANGERFIELD

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ESSAYS AND CRITICISM

AN INTRODUCTION TO EDWIN ARLINGTON ROBINSON *by Charles Cestre* (MACMILLAN. $1.75)

THE CENTRAL idea in this new study of America's foremost contemporary poet is expressed in the assertion that Robinson "deserves to be called not merely a classic but a modern classic—that is one who, while worshipping eternal truths, restates them in terms of the spirit of the age, in full sympathy with its justifiable and fruitful novelties". The judgment is as sound as the definition. Many readers, moreover, will find in these words a helpful interpretation of a poet who often seems to be preoccupied in a most unclassical way with psychological mazes and puzzles. The idea is amplified and illustrated in chapters on Robinson's Poetry of Emotion and Reflection, his Treatment of the Arthurian Legend, his Interpretative and Dramatic Poetry, his Humor, and his Psychology. It is phrased again in the author's Last Word, where we are reminded that although this poet is "the heir of the romanticists by his keen perception of all that the conquest of the realm of the senses and the emotions has done for the enrichment of poetry . . . he resolutely leans towards the directness, simplicity, sanity and order, which in his mind are the only forms suited to a sincere observation of facts, a clear-sighted understanding of character, a balanced interpretation of conduct and a vigorous insight into the permanent truths of life".

This is evidently a sound underpinning for a book about Robinson which might, at just the present juncture, do valuable service to poetry and criticism alike. Certainly it would be helpful to those who cannot see the "classical" quality in Robinson's work merely to tell them with authority that it is there, and not a few contemporary writers of verse might profit from being shown how to be modern while remaining sane, from being made to see that the thing has been done by one whom most of them respect.

For these reasons it is the more unfortunate that Professor Cestre's book is less impressive in details than it is sound in general purport. One is disheartened to read on an early page that the faculty of imagination is "seldom to be found in natural association with the classical bent of mind", and to be assured that it forms, nevertheless, "a genuine and important part of Robinson's equipment". That is the sort of remark that should be left to ignorant young romantics, who have made it often enough; one is surprised to hear it echoed by a scholar of strong humanistic leanings who dates his book from the University of Paris. Again, any one who has toiled through half a dozen characteristic Robinsonian labyrinths of words will be amazed at the assertion that a chief characteristic of the poet's style is "a subtle involution of thought united with a great simplicity of expression". (One may admit that Robinson's vocabulary is simple, that his word-order is for the most part remarkably close to that of prose, and yet insist that his "expression" as a whole is decidedly complex.) Worst of all, there are too many passages in the book that announce the obvious or flounder in banality, such as the sentence in which we are told that "Robinson's style abounds in brilliant and tasteful beauties". Some excuse for these faults may be found in the fact that Professor Cestre is not writing in

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his native tongue, and still more, no doubt, in the fact that the materials of the volume were first prepared for public lectures. Even with these allowances made, one feels that the tone of the book is too admiring. No one fit to judge has any doubt that Edwin Arlington Robinson is a poet of high order. It should be the critic's task to indicate not only his extraordinary powers but also his more important defects.

For those thousands of readers to whom Robinson "needs no introduction", the most valuable part of this book will be the chapter on the poet's treatment of the Arthurian legend. Here Professor Cestre stands stoutly against much expert opinion, and he has said things in praise of *Merlin, Lancelot,* and *Tristram* that will have to be carefully considered by every serious student of Robinson's work. As a whole, however, the book will be most helpful to those who have little knowledge of the subject and who are beginning to wonder, somewhat late in the day, whether it is not worth their attention.

ODELL SHEPARD

IMAGIST ANTHOLOGY 1930 (COVICI-FRIEDE. $3.50)

In 1914 the polyglot Ezra Pound assembled into an anthology, *Des Imagistes,* eleven young conspirators against the established order of letters: Richard Aldington, Hilda Doolittle, F. S. Flint, Skipwith Cannell, Amy Lowell, Dr. William Carlos Williams, James Joyce, Pound, Ford Madox Hueffer, Allen Upward, and John Cournos. The late Miss Lowell's three symposia, *Some Imagist Poets,* listed their illuminates as Aldington, H. D., John Gould Fletcher, Flint, D. H. Lawrence, and Miss Lowell. Thirteen in all: these illustrious. Four have fallen by the way; but nine of the veterans have gathered, at the inspiration of Mr. Ford Madox Ford (né Hueffer), for a kind of Grand Army Reunion, a last salute of the good old colors. A kind of mild melancholy pervades the volume: as befits a *Festschrift* it is retrospective and assessive. It opens with some pages of recollection contributed by Mr. Ford and a careful historical Foreword by a young American professor, Glenn Hughes; it concludes with a bibliography of genuine Imagist works.

A prefatory note warns the reader that the present coöperative volume is "not intended as an attempt to revive Imagism as an *avant-garde* movement". And Mr. Ford's remarks concur with the warning. Imagism was definitely of its day, has had its day. Not too earnestly does this veteran of the veterans regard the defunct movement. Under "Those Were the Days" he brushes up his memory (and ours) upon such other more or less concurrent world-stirring movements as Futurism, Cubism and Vorticism. Something of youthful esprit and gusto comes over the veteran Ford as he recalls the esthetic gyrations of the day. Some details, alas, remain obscure. "What exactly Vorticism was—though its most loyal champion—I never knew. That was probably because of Mr. Pound's sinfully incomprehensible—because so pre-diluvian—American accent and Mr. [Wyndham] Lewis's almost inaudible mumbles. I would be led along the narrow streets of the transatlantic downtown region, poor Mr. Pound holding one arm and Mr. Lewis the other; and Mr. Pound with an extreme rapidity of diction would yawp into my one ear admirable doctrine, in the dialect and with the gesture of a pre-war nigger-daddy who had passed the greater part of his life in Camden, N. J., under the shadow of the good grey poet. And Mr. Lewis, into the other ear, would be letting drop vitriolic but inaudible denunciations of the other side".

About this time Futurism had split into Vorticism and Cubism. The points at issue, alas, also escape Mr. Ford's memory. But he thinks the Vorticists "came nearer to remaining Futurists *pur sang,* for I could not discern that they had any working creed at all. At any rate none beyond the agreeable occu-

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pations of *épatéing* the Bourgeois and wearing green trousers came through to me".

Not quite solemn enough for a *Festschrift*, these recollections: too much levity; a kind of middle-aged mirth at the intensities of youthful doctrinaires. But the last pages sober down as Ford breathes the plaintive prayer: "For myself, when any young people with whiskers and sombreros are kicking up any sort of row, anywhere, about anything, I will —if they permit it!—be with them". Still hungering after the flesh-pots of "movements", apparently.

Professor Hughes, to whose façade one next comes, offers a much more earnest view of Imagism, is concerned to state its claims and justify them. He asserts of the movement that it "legitimized free verse, cleared the air of musty artifice and shallow sentiment, revived the clarity and conciseness of the Greeks, substituted classical objectivity for romantic cosmicism, demonstrated the effectiveness of the Oriental miniature, and accomplished a re-wedding of the intellect and the emotions". All this without a quiver of the eyelids. The late Amy Lowell, whose Imagist Credo must by now have entered the text-books, could scarcely have claimed more.

The claims can hardly be substantiated. However much *vers libre* may have been "legitimized" by Miss Amy Lowell and her friends, it can scarcely be said to have retained the importance they gave it: the next generation has, in the main, rejected its facilities. Robinson and Frost did more to clear the air than any of the imagists, and performed the clearing without fanfare. Imagism is "Greek" only in the most romantic of senses: classical literature transcends by including the image, and is distinctive for its synthesis of the esthetic and the philosophical, for its justice to the whole range of human interests, rather than for the narrow sort of objectivity, appropriate to the plastic arts, which constituted the self-elected province of imagism. The intellect and the emotions were wedded by Donne; and have since been remarried by Emily Dickinson and Eleanor Wylie, and the Fugitives and others. I doubt that the imagists attempted this; certainly they did not succeed. A poetry which was, in Miss Lowell's terms, "hard and clear", they did achieve, but a poetry that was often metallic in its hardness. Imagism in reality did justice neither to the emotions nor to the intellect. Miss Lowell demanded "absolute freedom in the choice of subject", but this turned out to be the demand for liberty to treat subjects hitherto untreated. Imagism was by its very definition limited to a much narrower range of emotions (i.e., the purely esthetic) than the undoctrinaire poetry which it censured; and by definition it excluded intellectual content (i.e., psychology and metaphysics).

The Imagist Anthology 1930 collects the work of former imagists, but can hardly be said to exhibit further consistency of tone, or the persistence in the imagist way of life of the contributors. H. D. remains true to form, contributing more of her classical delicacies. Dr. W. C. Williams of Rutherford, N. J., also may still be counted among the faithful (at any rate, the typography of his poems is imagistic, and their significance is not to the intellect). Joyce is represented by three pages from *Work in Progress*.

The rest of the company bring offerings of another sort. Aldington's "The Eaten Heart" is a passionate and brilliant criticism of current confusion of sex and love:

> A man or woman might die for love
> And be glad in dying;
> But who would die for sex?
> Die for food or drink?
> Better turn monk
> And keep your sperm for God
> And hard despair.
> Will you die for a hot instinct,
> The rut of insect and beast. . . . ?

Cournos contributes a one-act refinement upon Shakespeare's psychology, called "Shylock's Choice" and a parabolic "God's Face" in poetic prose. John Gould Fletcher's "Hymn

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to the Present Day" says nothing new, but is surely far from "pure poetry" in its bitter, ironic exposé of triumphant modernism. The same doctrinaire note sounds in his "Jazz Age" and "Manhattan Nights".

The best things in the miscellany are six slight but exceedingly dexterous and pointed and sophisticated sketches in *vers libre* by D. H. Lawrence. Hardly typical of their maker, their quality is a fine wit; and the loves they pierce and fix upon the wall for exhibition emanate from neurotic vanity rather than passion. Ford Madox Ford's "Winter-Night Song" combines wit and passion to the confounding of the reader. The rhythm is infectious, and the orchestration thoroughly smart.

AUSTIN WARREN

THE MODERN ITALIAN NOVEL *by Domenico Vittorini* (UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA PRESS. $3.00)

PROFESSOR VITTORINI, already known in academic circles for his penetrating studies of recent Italian literature, has rendered a great service to readers in general as well as to his colleagues by presenting the first adequate estimate in English of a single phase of the new Italy's contribution to modern art.

Beginning in 1827 with the first really modern novel, the survey divides itself conveniently into three periods: the historical, the naturalistic, and the idealistic, exemplified in Manzoni, Verga, and Pirandello. D'Annunzio, who is here treated with an impartiality he has rarely known at the hands of his critics, figures, because of his decadent excesses, as the immediate cause for the violent reaction to naturalism which charaterizes the last thirty years. Among the late nineteenth-century writers the only obvious omissions are Alfredo Oriani and Matilde Serao, but among the younger novelists one notices several lacunae: Giovanni Comisso, Riccardo Bacchelli, Piero Gadda, Marco Ramperti and others. And as is usual with judgments concerning the contemporary, one might well contest the importance given to Bontempelli and Pirandello or the rather summary dismissal of Italo Svevo, Giovanni. Boine, and Delfino Cinelli. Nor would many, even of those familiar with the latest developments in the graphic arts, agree with the optimistic discovery of a new classicism in the present literary chaos. Furthermore, by consistently overlooking the powerful French and other foreign influences, the author runs the risk of suggesting that each new manifestation is of indigenous growth. Despite a few needless repetitions and a great number of plot-analyses, the volume is well composed, and Professor Vittorini writes his adopted language with so slight an accent that only skilled ears could detect it.

JUSTIN O'BRIEN

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A VARIED SHELF

GOODBYE TO WESTERN CULTURE *by Norman Douglas* (HARPERS. $3.00)

THIS is one of those rare books we can read profitably for the sheer delight of the author's cleverness and style. Norman Douglas, author of that *tour de force, South Wind*, is worth reading not for the wisdom of his observations, the excellence of his plots, or the emulation which might be accorded his example. But he is unquestionably worth reading for his pungent phrase, his sardonic and caustic wit, and his habit of standing every conventional idea upon its head.

In this present book, Mr. Douglas has used Katherine Mayo's notorious work, *Mother India*, as the basis of an attack on what we know as Western civilization. He says, in substance, that even if Mrs. Mayo is right in her assertions, the Indian way of life is still vastly superior to the European; and he proves his contentions by citing such stupidities as are a European counterpart of what H. L. Mencken publishes in his "Americana".

Now no one is going to take Mr. Douglas seriously in all he says. The virtues of Asiatic philosophy may be unknown to most of us; but Mr. Douglas's hinting that the East has a corner on all that is pleasant and sustaining in life is simply rosy theorizing, when it is not downright sophistry. Life in India is no simpler than it is in London, and to paint the practical worst about the West and the sentimental best about the East will not delude the erudite or the widely travelled. Stupidities abound wherever men are human, and although the compensations of an earlier Europe may please Mr. Douglas more than those of the present day, that is no reason to believe we are at the mercy of blue-noses, half-educated Demos, or a service-intoxicated rabble of legislators.

Those who are looking for another *South Wind* will not find it here. Nor will they find a repetition of that impossible hodge-podge of cleverness and pruriency, *In The Beginning*. There is, however, in this immediate work further evidence of Mr. Douglas's middle-aged preoccupation with sex—not in the boisterous, good-humored manner of his earlier work, but in a sullen and almost smirking bitterness which simply offends good taste.

GROWING UP IN NEW GUINEA *by Margaret Mead* (MORROW. $3.50)

FOLLOWING her examination of the social life of the Samoans, Miss Mead has turned her attentions to the Manus of New Guinea and found that we in America have the disadvantages of both the Samoan and Manus systems of education and the advantages of neither. The Samoan grows up to be an emotionally balanced personality, according to the author, and the Manus child achieves a socially equated self. American children possess in Miss Mead's eyes neither of these virtues. This study of New Guinean civilization has a certain objective interest. The intimate customs of any people are curious to us. But the comparison of a simple and almost primitive culture with one as complicated as that of the Western world seems to be rather exaggerated. When, in the latter half of the book, Miss Mead begins a discussion of American educational theory and drags in references to the Manus life the whole business becomes confused and lacking in point.

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She has written searchingly on our educational methods and her differentiations between culture and technique, tradition and mere propaganda are fundamentally sound and illuminating. But it is open to serious doubt whether we have anything of value to learn from the Manus so far as correcting our social life is concerned. Why should a highly complex civilization be compared with a relatively simple one? The psychological anthropologists no doubt believe they are getting close to highly civilized problems in examining a simple culture, just as the biologists seek the solution of ultimate human problems in the genes of a fruit fly. But it seems to us that the solution of our own educational blunders lies in an examination of our cultural tradition and not in the social systems of the Samoans and the Manus.

Therefore, Miss Mead's book fails in its apparent purpose: to show America a better individual development by pointing out the virtues of the Manus. But the facts she records about the Manus have an anthropological value, and her comments on American education if taken separately from the Manus information are well worth pondering, especially by those who believe education the universal panacea.

ALAN BURTON CLARKE

JOURNAL OF THINGS OLD AND NEW *by Arnold Bennett* (DOUBLEDAY, DORAN. $2.00)

MR. BENNETT'S publishers call this book "the diary of the modern Samuel Pepys", but one has only to read a few pages to know that they are wrong. For Pepys kept his diary in code so that other people should not read it, whereas it is obvious that Bennett's chief object in keeping a diary was that other people should. No man, for example, talks about his own books in just the way that Bennett does unless he wishes to be heard. But rushing one's nocturnal entries off to the printer is neither criminal nor unusual; the only important thing is what one has to say. Mr. Bennett is never at a loss for speech: these pages flow on full of gossip and anecdotes, reminiscences and observations and well-known and home-made aphorisms; they speak of books and plays and music, of hotels and châteaux and Italian cities; they bear discreet tidings of Arnold Bennett. They are entertaining in the sense that the jottings of a foreign correspondent or a columnist or an above-the-average letter writer are entertaining; but it seems to me that they lack true flavor and true personality. They are the work of a highly competent journalist; they are not the work of a gifted amateur. And the gifted amateur alone can keep a good journal; there is no such thing as a good "professional" diary.

Next to the distinctiveness of his personality, it is the distinctiveness of a diarist's mind that we go seeking. Mr. Bennett has an able mind so far as the creative instinct goes; we all know that from reading *Hilda Lessways* and *The Old Wives' Tale*. But in his response to art and people and everyday things he shows only the sententious commonplaceness of the usual educated Englishman. He describes in this book a trip through Italy; but in the course of the whole journey he does not seize on a single thing which shows real subtlety of observation, real insight into a foreign race, real superiority over the contents of a guide-book. When he turns to literary matters he has a tendency to acquaint you with familiar facts, the habit of praising without analyzing, the substitution of proverbs for thoughts, and a middle-class geniality—and, I suppose I should add, a saving sense of humor.

BOOKS: THEIR PLACE IN A DEMOCRACY *by R. L. Duffus* (HOUGHTON MIFFLIN. $2.00)

MR. DUFFUS has discussed the National Book Problem from every possible angle; from that of author and publisher, jobber and

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bookseller, book club and library—and, not least, from that of the reader. The facts he has transmitted will perhaps interest and will certainly surprise the many people who have always regarded books as a pastime and never as a business. And the many others who regarded them as a business, but as a highly romantic business, will find that statistics is a mighty leveller and that books can be drab and commercial as tooth-paste and shoes. Putting a book through the mill, from manuscript to consumer, has very little of the cultural about it, particularly in America. Mr. Duffus has traced the process with faithful and illuminating detail: he pretty well proves, I think, that writing and publishing and old-style bookselling are among the worst-paying businesses in existence. Consider but one fact in the matter: Mr. Duffus discovered that the average American buys two books, and reads seven, each year. Compare such an interest—shall we call it epicurean or just miserly?—in books with the same American's interest in movies, radios, candy or motor-cars, and draw your own cultural and economic conclusions.

None the less, however pessimistic his facts, Mr. Duffus is optimistic in tone: he believes that popular taste can be bettered to a considerable degree; that better selling methods will lead to the reading of more and better books. No one who compares the best sellers of today with those of thirty years ago can doubt the ultimate truth of this; but I for one think this betterment process is exhaustingly slow and partially misleading. Culture-pangs do make for better taste in reading, but never beyond a certain point; and to suppose that most really good books will ever have a truly wide appeal is as injudicious as to suppose the same thing of most really good art or music. There is no ethnical basis to support such a theory in America; and to put it on a democratic basis strikes me as ill-grounded idealism. The wise publisher will always hope for the best (such as the selection of a good book by a book club), but he mentally separates his quality publishing from his merchandise publishing.

Mr. Duffus's book is primarily, however, a book of facts rather than theories. And the facts he brings together form a minor contribution to any well-rounded study of contemporary American culture. So far as his optimism about growing popular interest in serious matters is concerned, the number of copies sold of his own book will constitute a very fair test.

LOUIS KRONENBERGER

A WRITER'S NOTES ON HIS TRADE
by C. E. Montague (DOUBLEDAY, DORAN. $2.00)

THESE are posthumous essays on literature, intended by the author for collection and now brought together by his wife. Though unrevised, they are finished pieces of work, humorous, deft, and penetrating. In this country criticism must too generally be solemnly prophetic or harshly satirical or ponderously learned or merely journalese; it seldom has the urbanity which is so richly the possession of the former editor of the *Manchester Guardian*. Montague writes in the full tradition of the personal essay, with refinement and skill but without preciousness. Perhaps he overloads his page with literary quotations, but some of them are admirably apt. A sweet reasonableness marks the point of view, along with a modest tentativeness which should not hide the real value of the opinions offered. The essay on Arnold, without being very profound, is charming and suggestive. "The Literary Play" draws valuable and illuminating distinctions. "The Delights of Tragedy" tackles one of the mysteries of esthetics, and makes fresh and stimulating suggestions about it. And the essays on problems of style, beside being a delight to read, should prove excellent guides to the student, for like Stevenson's they are not only subtle and sensible, but illustrate in themselves the merits they advocate.

ALAN REYNOLDS THOMPSON

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BY WAY OF CAPE HORN *by A. J. Villiers* (HOLT. $3.50)

LANDSMEN visioning the sea as related in the old-time lore of sailing ships and Happy Jack the Sailorman should read this book. It is the story of the cruise of the old *Grace Harwar*, a wheat carrier, from Wallaroo, Australia, to England, made in 1929 amid hardships almost unbelievable. The old *Grace*, like most of the ghosts of her kind which have lingered over into this era of steam, was poorly provisioned and equipped with rotten gear, and her one-hundred-and-thirty-eight-day journey is a tale of misery and death, vividly told by the author of *Falmouth for Orders*. There have been good books before this describing the cruel existence in those lovely old windjammers, but they have dealt with an era now remote, while this is a story of the present. And it highly commends itself to readers who have been beguiled into the belief that the old-time seamen were jovial, tough old salts who just couldn't be hurt by anything and who were all sensitive to the beauty of sail.

Although a landsman, I have shipped as a common seaman on ocean freighters where the routine is incomparably softer than on the sailing vessels, and know that even the modern steamship sailor labors prodigiously and endures a vicious serfdom. Though never having shipped in sail, I have talked to many who have, and they had nothing but bitter words for the old days. Mr. Villiers's cruise was made under conditions far worse than any in the heyday of the windjammer trade; for then a ship was manned by a full complement of able seamen, the equipment was in repair and the owners took pride in their vessel. These last surviving ships are undermanned, foul, and almost derelict by comparison, their crews nondescript—romantic boys, broken old men, desperate fugitives. *By Way of Cape Horn* is an admirable record, told by one who suffered with his shipmates. Although rather loosely thrown together, the book encompasses the whole picture of the groaning, laboring, dreadful—and beautiful—old anachronism of a ship, at times achieving a fierce and passionate strength which may without blushing be compared with Melville.

R. P. HARRISS

PYRAMID AND TEMPLE *by Julius Meier-Graefe* (MACAULAY. $5.00)

THE famous German art critic, author of perhaps the best-known book on Van Gogh, has published in *Pyramid and Temple* the journal of a tour which he made recently through Egypt, Palestine, and Greece. The greater portion of his book is devoted to Egypt, and most of Herr Meier-Graefe's comments are concerned with the architecture and the sculpture that he saw there. His tone is decidedly informal, and he does not disdain to seek to amuse his reader with anecdotes of tourists, guides, et cetera. Since the only scheme of his book is that imposed by his tour, he finds time for his impressions upon seeing a performance of *The Dybbuk* by the Habima players in Palestine, for a dinner-table argument with Richard Strauss in Athens, for the story of his furious disagreement with Röhricht, the authority on Islamic art, over the architectural value of mosques, and for several other digressions. There is also a running account of his debates with the young woman who accompanies him—referred to as Babuschka and doubtless his wife. (The book is illustrated with photographs which Babuschka took *en route*.)

The reader's principal interest, of course, lies in the critical reflections inspired in Herr Meier-Graefe by the works of art which he saw. Needless to say, these are always acute and sensitive. They are not, however, organized, or put into the form of systematic criticism. The book cannot be said to be more than the semi-professional jottings and conversation of an art critic on a holiday.

GERALD SYKES

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NO HARD FEELINGS *by John Lewis Barkley* (COSMOPOLITAN. $2.00)

A FARM BOY from the Middle West, John Lewis Barkley, scarcely eighteen years old, with a stammer so exaggerated that the recruiting officers would not accept him, finally contrived to pass the Draft Board. He was enrolled in the Intelligence Corps, where he was trained in scouting and sniping, and where he learned, by dint of painful monosyllables, to answer the telephone. Barkley distinguished himself at once by his aptitude for hard, dangerous, independent activity. He fought through Château-Thierry and the Meuse-Argonne. Near Cunel, on the seventh of October, 1918, Barkley was sent to an advanced and dangerous observation post which he occupied until his communications were destroyed. Stranded between the lines, he took possession of an abandoned and disabled French tank, mounted in it a captured machine gun and, by his single efforts, frustrated two enemy counter-attacks. He emerged at the end of the war with a shirtful of decorations, among them the coveted Congressional Medal of Honor, and an undiminished taste for fighting.

No Hard Feelings is Barkley's story of the war. It is an unornamented narrative, similar in temper to William T. Scanlon's prize novel, *God Have Mercy on Us.* Barkley, like Scanlon, views war as a soldier's business—as a job to be undertaken efficiently and without heroics. More than this, Barkley liked fighting. He found it an absorbing game. He volunteered for hard and adventurous missions. Three times he refused promotion because he preferred the mobility and independence of a private and because, as he said, he was indisposed to waste his time nursing a bunch of recruits. He would tend his own injuries or submit to the crude medical attentions of a comrade rather than risk being sent to the hospital. He never voluntarily missed a bit of action, and he was unusually apt in exciting action where none had previously existed. In the midst of a flood of neurotic and shell-shocked war fiction, Barkley's attitude is, if not superlatively intelligent, at least refreshing.

Barkley has this advantage over most men who have described the war to us—that he belonged to a fluid and well-informed branch of the service, that he was not immured in a trench, and that he was able to obtain a wider and more coherent picture of the practical science of modern warfare. *No Hard Feelings* is a straightforward and unassuming narrative, which more than compensates for its undeniable lack of literary value by the quality and abundance of its material.

WAGONS WEST *by Elizabeth Page* (FARRAR & RINEHART. $5.00)

HERE is the story of the Oregon Trail, compiled from the letters of Henry Page, a young New Englander who participated in the gold rush of 1849. Born in Vermont, and graduated from Middlebury College, Henry had gone to Illinois in 1837 and started a general store in the town of Woodburn. His affairs prospered and he married Mary Rider, daughter of a pioneer family prominent in the history of Illinois. In 1845 his business was ruined by the defalcation of a partner. Henry was left without resources and burdened with debts. His father in Vermont came to the rescue and lent Henry the money to buy a small farm, but life was very grim for the little family unused to hardship. Restless and discontented, Henry had wanted to cast his lot with the expedition organized by Donner in 1846, but his wife's objections prevailed. The Donner Expedition perished miserably in the Rocky Mountains, and horrible and exaggerated reports drifted back to Illinois. For two or three more years Henry worked his farm and struggled with a mountainous debt. When news of the discovery of gold in California trickled through in the late fall of 1848, he was not to be restrained. Going further into debt for the necessary equip-

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ment, he set out in 1849, with three companions in a heavy Conestoga wagon, for the beckoning Eldorado.

Unlike the members of the earlier emigrations, the men bound for the gold fields left their families behind, and travelled with the absolute minimum of burdensome equipment. Page and his companions were among the first five thousand of the twenty-seven thousand who started the great race. Thus they escaped the major hardships of the trail, the shortage of fodder for the teams, and the epidemic of cholera which literally decimated the expedition. Meanwhile, his wife at home struggled with worry, poverty, and illness. Their letters, exchanged during the two trying years of Henry's absence, provide the backbone of the book. The narrative of the trail, sometimes scanty during the necessarily long gaps between Henry's letters, has been filled in with excerpts from the picturesque journal of Joseph Hackney, likewise a member of the Jersey company of 'Forty-niners.

There is nothing exceptional in the character, motives, or fortunes of Henry Page. In the main, he followed where others led, one of the great middle class of Western pioneers, and his path was unmarked by great daring, or by great rewards. For this reason, if for no other, his story is eminently worthy of preservation. The hardihood, the simplicity, the unconsciously epic quality of his adventures, are representative rather than individual, and the color of a whole generation is contained in his unimaginative correspondence. Elizabeth Page, a grand-niece of Henry Page, has edited his letters and compiled the narrative with great care and accuracy.

MARGARET WALLACE

BEASTS CALLED WILD *by André Demaison* (FARRAR & RINEHART. $3.50)

THIS is an excellent book, difficult to classify. It was awarded the *Prix du Roman* by the French Academy last year, yet it certainly is not a novel. It is a collection of tales about animals whose personalities are deftly sketched and characterized by a man who knows their ways and knows how to write.

The first of his tales deals with Ouara, a lioness. His descriptions of her behavior when the wind blows at night, bringing jungle scents and the smell of lions to her nostrils, transforming her from the domesticated animal of the daytime into an alert and intensely alive female of the species, is as thrilling a passage as any book holds. This is only one of many expert and exciting portraits.

Beasts Called Wild is a good book to read amid a welter of introspective and shoddy prose. The translation, by Guy Endore, is well made, with few lapses from dignified English. The illustrations by André Durenceau go far to make it a book for one's own delight and the delight of one's friends.

CHARLES NORMAN

LABORERS IN THE VINEYARD *by Giovanni Papini* (LONGMANS, GREEN. $2.00)

IF THE present enthusiasm on the part of publishers and the reading public continues, the "wild man of Florence" will soon be obliged to take out his first papers—for this is the third translation from Papini's works within a year. And in fact these original sketches, brilliant as they are, suffer somewhat by being presented to us while our eyes are still dazzled by the magnificent fresco he painted in his *Saint Augustine*, for they are primarily significant, especially to those unfamiliar with many of the faces in this gallery of portraits, as an illustration of a stage in their author's spiritual evolution and as an introduction to his new literary method. The common denominator which unites such disparate figures as Petrarch and Saint Francis, Oscar Ghiglia and Joseph de Maistre, Michelangelo and Pius XI is found in Papini's statement that the only truly admirable men in the world are saints and artists: "those who imitate God and those who imitate the works of God". Accordingly

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several contemporary artists, unfortunately unknown outside of the Venetian biennial exhibits, are here treated equally with those "that have borne the burden of the day and the heat". The most comprehensive, and perhaps the most satisfactory, study is that devoted to Alessandro Manzoni, the great novelist of *The Betrothed*, on whom it would be almost impossible for anyone but Papini to say something new. But by far the most provocative of these essays is the one in which he answers the favorite medieval question as to the providential mission of pre-Christian Rome by seeing in Caesar a prefiguration of Christ. As in the case of *Saint Augustine*, the translation rises well above the average work, and the few and intelligent notes constitute a valuable addition to the text.

JUSTIN O'BRIEN

THE EPOCHS OF GERMAN HISTORY *by J. Haller* (HARCOURT, BRACE. $3.50)

PROFESSOR HALLER explained his book as an attempt to find, through a survey of the whole course of German history, some indication of the way out of the hopelessness which since the war has burdened so many of his countrymen. In the course of this review he finds that the periods of Germany's glory, from Barbarossa to Bismarck, were periods in which the state achieved unity and the power without which a state cannot fulfil the purpose of its existence. Germany's arch-problem is the geographical problem of the double front which requires her to face East and West at the same time; under such circumstances a divided state is condemned to impotence; yet German history is a long story of particularism. Typical epochs are those of the jealousies of the territorial states or the individualism of the Reformation ("many will consider that, if the restoration of the unity of the state was at issue, it would have been well secured even at the cost of the suppression of Protestantism"). On a few vital occasions Germany has united above these discords, as she did outstandingly under Bismarck. It is to such periods as these that Germans must look for hope.

The book is an adequate outline of German history viewed selectively in search of the strong state. Whether or not the hope of a people lies in that direction, and whether or not the moments of Germany's greatness have coincided with her moments of unity, are points on which there is considerable room for disagreement with the author.

H. D. HILL

THE GOLDEN GROVE: SELECTED PASSAGES FROM THE SERMONS AND WRITINGS OF JEREMY TAYLOR *edited by Logan Pearsall Smith with a bibliography by Robert Gathorne-Hardy.* (OXFORD. $3.50)

THE present age may not care for Jeremy Taylor's moralizing, but it foolishly denies itself if it allows this to stand in the way of the enjoyment of his excellent prose. The Bishop wrote in a grand and elaborate style which, as Mr. Pearsall Smith points out in his revealing prefatory essay, is all too rare nowadays. Taylor came in a period when English prose was reaching one of its highest peaks; in the writings of the seventeenth-century divines, when it had just emerged from the immature intricacies of early Elizabethan language, yet when words still had a value other than their bare meaning. Mr. Pearsall Smith repeats again, and rightly, that style cannot be divorced from subject; a qualification would be that this applies chiefly to the very best style. More than a casual examination will reveal that in those passages in which he is at his best the message Taylor has to convey is a deep one and a true one, or, if he is painting a picture, that his observation is of the acutest. In this passage, for instance, a truth is spoken beautifully: " . . . and carry your meditations awhile into the chambers of death, where

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you shall find the room dressed up with melancholy arts, and fit to converse with your most retired thoughts, which begin with a sigh and proceed with deep consideration, and end in holy resolution". Jeremy Taylor is also a master of the extended simile, and if his similes never ring false to our ears it is because he does not stretch his truth to fit its illustration—he knew that metaphor was no substitute for logic. Mr. Pearsall Smith says that in sustained work Taylor is dull and not always consistent in his thought, but the selections he has made give no indication of dulness. The volume is in the handsome format one expects of Oxford books, and the bibliography should prove of service to the more serious student of Taylor.

GEOFFREY STONE

THE ENGLISHMAN AND HIS BOOKS IN THE EARLY NINETEENTH CENTURY *by Amy Cruse* (CROWELL. $3.50)

WHEN Thomas Babington Macaulay read *Santo Sebastiano*, by Mrs. Kitty Cuthbertson, in the early 1830's, he made a list at the end of the book of the number of fainting spells credited to the characters therein. "Mr. Driver lends us *Blackwood's Magazine*, the most able periodical there is," wrote thirteen-year-old Charlotte Brontë in 1829. Jane Austen wrote in 1815 to Cassandra: "Walter Scott has no business to write novels, especially good ones. It is not fair. I do not mean to like *Waverley* if I can help it, but I fear I must", and in the first number of *The Monthly Preceptor*, a magazine for children, in 1800, it was announced that Master James Henry Leigh Hunt and Master Thomas Love Peacock, both aged fourteen, had won prizes for poetical answers to the question, "Is history or biography the more improving study?"

Of such stuff is *The Englishman and his Books* made, a volume in which the author has attempted to watch, during the period from 1790 to 1837, "books pass into the hands of the reader, to note his reaction to them, and the reaction, in turn, of his liking or disliking, his enthusiasm or indifference, his opposition or agreement, on the output of new literature".

Since she is concerned with the reception of literature, the reader obtains startling conceptions of the contemporary importance of various authors. It is hard to think of servants nowadays going mad over the work of any poet, yet when Byron's *Childe Harold* was first published he was read below stairs as well as in drawing rooms with avid interest. The triumph of the "Waverley Novels" extended to the school room, where boys hid *Ivanhoe* or *Rob Roy* behind their text-books, and Wordsworth and Coleridge's *Lyrical Ballads* were as much a matter of literary discussion at the time of their publication as *Ulysses* was a few years ago.

Not only is the ground of fiction well covered but also the serious literature of the period: Thomas Paine, Godwin, Adam Smith, Malthus, the literature of the working man and the sociologist, is taken into consideration, as well as Evangelical tracts.

Evidence is taken from diaries, letters, pamphlets, biographies and autobiographies, reviews, et cetera. With material as illusive as this must often be, Mrs. Cruse would indeed be a genius if she were to avoid altogether redundancy and improvising. Both of these faults, unfortunately, are conspicuous. In some chapters it seems that the ground has been covered adequately many times before, while in others she seems to forsake direct evidence to build her thesis upon pure supposition. Still again, however, notably in her quotations, the reader has a flash of insight into the times that more than justifies the author's effort to develop the theme in this way. Although there is no chapter on cartoons, the illustrations of the book, taken from drawings of Gillray, Cruikshank and others, speak for themselves.

MYRA M. WATERMAN

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THE MIRROR OF KONG HO *by Ernest Bramah* (DOUBLEDAY, DORAN. $2.00)

WITH what glad cries the admirers of Kai Lung must have flocked to the booksellers' when they saw announced *The Mirror of Kong Ho*. For readers of Bramah are lovers of Bramah; they may or may not be numerous, but they are as devoted as they are discerning. In his leisurely method and circuitous approach, Ernest Bramah writes to some degree for a special audience. But who living could be insensible to the beguiling charms of Kong Ho as he explores the Occident with demure but sparkling eyes?

Ever hopeful, ever enquiring, Kong Ho preserves "a consistent expression of harmonious agreement and gratified esteem", although, from the moment he lands at demon-ridden London in an evil yellow fog to the moment when he is discovered impersonating Fang, the Boxer Chieftan in a booth on Hampstead Heath, his wide-minded toleration is taxed at every turn by the obliquity of barbarian logic. Whether he converses with maidens, or makes dog-pie for his fellow boarders, or plays sit-round games, or takes part in "a cricket", or rides all day in circles in a fire chariot in the Beneath Parts, still he is blown upon by the winds of complication.

The unfolding of these matters is conveyed by a sure hand in letters to his Venerated Sire, who, reclining in the Flowery Middle Kingdom beneath the sign of the Lead Tortoise, and partaking of his favorite dish of stewed mouse, fails to appreciate their merit, and brings exploration and book to an end by calling Kong Ho home.

If the East remains inscrutable, Ernest Bramah is not to blame; there is more in his smiling narrative than you would find in a hundred books of travel, or studies of the denizens of the Flowery Kingdom. It is inside knowledge of a province he has made his own. His gentle wit plays keenly but kindlily over the observer and the observed, and the story told by Kong Ho at the "all water-disportment" is a gem of the purest ray. The open-headed critic might, if he wished to carp, complain that not all these is only in comparison with his own best that this author suffers. Weighing his delicately poised shafts with the efforts of the average hit-or-miss humorist we must "remember that Chang Chow's ceiling is Tong Wi's floor".

The pages of Bramah have the bouquet of the rarest tea, of a kind not imported, and drunk only by mandarins of high button, and in this amber atmosphere live his amiable personages, displaying, even under the most excruciating trials, that affable demeanor which is the conscious art of the countrymen of the polite Confucius.

OLGA KATZIN

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FLEDGLING FICTION

FIFTEEN BOOKS ON A DEAD REVIEWER'S CONSCIENCE

Something should be done about it. For a brief time I thought that young men and young women had ceased to write those longish novels which deal so painstakingly and often so painfully with the discovery of maturity. I thought that a self-conscious and literate generation, looking through the hundreds of books of the last thirty years which have recorded youth's struggles to accommodate itself to a world in which instinct and reason and their several allies are at war, would say "I can write nothing new on this subject", and so turn to the consideration of other themes. I was in error, it appears. The biographical novel is still with us. Do not misunderstand me. I have no quarrel with the biographical novel as such. I have no quarrel with the story of adolescence provided it deal with a person whose character and experiences are not mere reproductions of those I have encountered before. But books about pasteboard persons following a stereotyped routine fill me with weariness and I wish to read no more of them.

So it may be that I am dealing unjustly with the Longmans Green novel *This Pure Young Man* by Irving Fineman ($2.00), when I say that I find it empty of interest and almost void of merit. Mr. Fineman is observant: he furnishes his readers with good factual reports of a number of incidents, and he writes with fluency if without grace. But in not one of his three hundred and sixty-eight pages do I find any clue to the essential character of Roger Bendrow or acquire any conviction of his existence. He is perhaps a person. But he appears merely a shadow to whom certain pallid adventures occur—a bit of a prig, a bit of a weakling, but neither of these in any human sense such as would awaken in the reader a sense of kinship if not of sympathy with him.

Even the implications of the title are lost midway of the story. Roger Bendrow is not "a particularly pure young man" as the line from *Patience* quoted in the front of the book would indicate. He balks at participating in a casual orgy with a handful of prospective fraternity brothers and their ladies of the evening: he exhibits a thoroughly conventional adolescent interest in sex and a not unusual hesitancy in the face of actual experience; and he shies off from an entanglement with an eager and saccharine young person named Bee after a conversation which, for sheer fatuousness, exceeds anything I have read in several months. But these episodes are not determinants either of his character or his career. They are merely part of an uncoördinated series of events in the life of someone not precisely defined and uninvitingly presented throughout three hundred and sixty-eight pages of reading matter.

I had reached this point in what promised to be a petulant report upon a month's rather excessive reading when my eye fell upon a book which thus far I had neglected. I picked it up with a good deal more of reluctance than one should bring to the reading of any book—and remained with it, delighted and fascinated and deeply moved until I had finished it. I do not readily cry "masterpiece" and I shall not do so now. But I do announce that in William Fitzgerald, Jr., I have encountered for the first time this season a young man who knows what the novel is about, what people are about, and who knows how

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to put the latter on paper winningly and accurately and select from their lives the events which best illuminate their characters, forming the whole into a narrative that is authentic and well-proportioned and extraordinarily alive.

It is a book called *Gentlemen All* (Longmans, Green. $2.00) that I am talking about: the story of a young man stopped short in his career as a lawyer, first by the delicate machinations of the girl he marries, later by the inert pressure of public opinion among his native Virginia friends and relatives. It is the story of his slow moral starvation and death, told so gallantly, with such a complete absence of posturing or false sympathy, and with so much vivacity, that it seems at times almost high comedy rather than the tragedy it is. And with what ease, what assurance Mr. Fitzgerald handles his story: from the adroit beginning, when by means of a dexterous use of assonance and a dancing rhythm he sets his scene; in the skilful, quick sketching of his characters, everyone of whom gains in clarity and living detail as the tale develops; right through to the last chapter filled with a dissolute merriment that so suddenly and so rightly turns into tragedy, there is no passage of which one can say "this rings false" or "this would be better so". This, too, is a biographical novel, you will note, but with what a difference. This is a *novel*—and its author, I venture to say, a young man we shall be talking about in the future.

Mr. Fitzgerald is, I take it, from the south; and from, or rather via the south—for he is a native New Yorker—comes also another talented young writer, Francis Griswold, whose *The Tides of Malvern* (Morrow, $2.50) is a vivid and pleasing novel of Charleston. Perhaps I should say of several Charlestons, for the book begins in the early eighteenth century when Charles Town was the correct name, and James Sheldon, the widower, came there from Barbados, building Malvern Barony nearby. As is the case in many novels which follow the history of a single family through several generations, it is the house which is the focal point of the tale. Here James and his wife are killed by the Indians; here his son Gilbert squires it through long years which change the countryside, and even long after the Revolution has come and gone. The house mellows through the years following, with new men of the Sheldon name growing up, marrying, and breeding sons in their turn. And the land and the times change, and there are wars and boom times and panics, until the last Sheldon man dies at the end of the great war, and his mother remains as solitary chatelaine.

Mr. Griswold succeeds well in compressing his generations into the limits of a not overlong book. His Sheldons are substantial persons and their lives, for all the brevity with which they are treated, proceed at an unhurried pace. He succeeds, too, in communicating more than a little of the color of the various periods with which he deals, and at all times he shows himself keenly and intelligently aware of the quality of his background—a South ever changing, but maintaining always a gracious savor of its own. All in all, a sound romantic novel this: competent and poised and at moments reaching a high level.

A few weeks ago the newspapers carried the story of the death at an early age of a young Scotsman, Donald Stewart. That death is the unhappy sequel to his first and only book *Sanatorium* (Harpers. $2.50), a singularly fine performance which stands almost alone in contemporary literature. For *Sanatorium* is one of the few books which deal with illness, not as a subject on which sentimental vulgarity may ease itself, but more legitimately as a vital determinant in the lives of a group of people.

The scene of this poignant book is a sanatorium for victims of tuberculosis; the characters, almost without exception, are dying men and women. The core of the tale is the little drama which arises during the brief period of Clive Bradford's last battle with his disease. Writing in a quiet, restrained prose,

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blinking at none of the distressing details of the half-life he describes, the author somehow evoked beauty from his scene. It is a sad book, but never a revolting one; a book possessed of dignity and, it may be, more of life than is to be found in much writing of a robuster sort.

Space permits only a word of commendation on so delicately fabricated a book as *Bid Her Awake* by Mary Grigs (Houghton Mifflin. $2.00). There is dignity here, and beauty as well. It is the story of a conflict between two sisters, the imperious Alix and the shy suddenly transfigured Susan, and the latter's brief excursion into love. It is an air for muted strings that Miss Grigs gives us, with little dancing notes of gaiety in it, and a sombre theme. So quietly is it done that the insensitive reader may fail to perceive the artistry with which it is composed; though he cannot fail to be charmed by the effect so subtly created.

Scarcely less finished and not less intelligently conceived is *Rhododendron Pie* by Margery Sharp (Appleton. $2.50) a novel which makes polite hash of the human pretensions of a family of desiccated hedonists. Miss Sharp pictures with a suave pen the polished, cynical Laventies, so civilized in their esthetic appreciations, so barbarous in their emotions, and employs with skill a slight story and an equally slight, although charming, heroine, to point her moral. The moral is sound, but that she should make so obvious a point of it as she does in her final chapter is regrettable.

There are novelty of setting, good writing and distinct promise in *Gulf Stream* by Marie Stanley (Coward-McCann. $1.50), a story of Alabama negro life that stands quite apart from other recent novels of this *genre*. Adele Childers, the mulatto girl who wants so desperately to be white, is perhaps somewhat over-simplified as she appears in the book, and I have a feeling that a novel of much more considerable proportions might have been made of her life. One character in the story is excellently realized: Bezelia, the elegant "creole" who imparts to the pages in which she appears a color and a reality which otherwise are lacking.

There is a grim element of reality in *Wives of Men* by David McCloud (Longmans, Green. $2.00) and a really impressive figure in the character of Ma Stresser as she is depicted in the early part of the book. Indeed, the first half of this uneven tale promises to be such another dour masterpiece as *The House With the Green Shutters*, and I shall not soon forget the sinister images of the Vrooman men as they appear through the eyes of the old grandmother. But the latter half of the book is disappointing. Emotions subside into querulousness and what has promised to be drama on the grand scale becomes a petty conflict. It is all a matter of that old test of sustained atmosphere.

So generous have the publishers been to new talent that only the briefest comment can be given to the books that remain. *Black Soil* by Josephine Donovan (Stratford. $2.50) is another prize novel, an uninspired story of pioneer life in Iowa, done with a fidelity and a sincerity which keep it from being unimpressive . . . *The Lily of Fort Garry* by Jane Rolyat (Dutton. $2.50) deals also with pioneer life in Western Canada and tells a very pretty story in a delightfully archaic manner . . . *A Tale of Reading Town* by T. Bennett Nolan (Boni. $2.50) is a pleasingly inconsequential story of Revolutionary days . . . *Red Snow* by F. Wright Moxley (Simon & Schuster. $1.00) describes at too great length what the author thinks might happen if childbearing suddenly ceased. A dull, pretentious book . . . *Wind Without Rain* by Shan Sedgwick (Scribner's. $2.00) is a determinedly modern satirical novel which, despite two good scenes, does not come off . . . *Wild Onion* by Loren Carroll (Dodd, Mead. $2.00) is another novel of Chicago gangdom, and *Party Husband* by Geoffrey Barnes (King. $1.50) is a piece of offensive silliness masking as sophistication.

GUY HOLT

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THE BOOKMAN'S MONTHLY SCORE

COMPILED BY FRANK PARKER STOCKBRIDGE, LIFE MEMBER OF THE AMERICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION, IN COÖPERATION WITH THE PUBLIC LIBRARIES OF AMERICA

If *The Adams Family* achieves anything like the popularity among library readers that was gained ten years ago by *The Education of Henry Adams*, we may expect to see this newcomer to our lists riding the top of the wave for many months to come. But there was only one Henry in the Adams family, and no other Adams of whom your chronicler has ever heard ever felt the urge to "speak out in meeting" as frankly and almost naïvely as Henry did. It is a good guess that more abiding interest will attach to the adventures of the (by comparison) roughneck Sam Houston, as set forth in *The Raven*.

—F. P. S.

NOVELS

1. LAUGHING BOY	*Oliver La Farge*	HOUGHTON MIFFLIN
2. ALL QUIET ON THE WESTERN FRONT	*Erich Maria Remarque*	LITTLE, BROWN
3. CIMARRON	*Edna Ferber*	DOUBLEDAY, DORAN
4. EXILE	*Warwick Deeping*	KNOPF
5. THE SCARAB MURDER CASE	*S. S. Van Dine*	SCRIBNER'S
6. ROGUE HERRIES	*Hugh Walpole*	DOUBLEDAY, DORAN
7. THE DOOR	*Mary Roberts Rinehart*	FARRAR & RINEHART
8. THE GREAT MEADOW	*Elizabeth Madox Roberts*	VIKING
9. THE SELBYS*	*Anne Green*	DUTTON
10. A LANTERN IN HER HAND	*Bess Streeter Aldrich*	APPLETON
11. YOUNG MAN OF MANHATTAN	*Katharine Brush*	FARRAR & RINEHART
12. MARGARET YORK*	*Kathleen Norris*	DOUBLEDAY, DORAN

GENERAL

1. THE GREEN PASTURES	*Marc Connelly*	FARRAR & RINEHART
2. BYRON	*André Maurois*	APPLETON
3. NEW WORLDS TO CONQUER	*Richard Halliburton*	BOBBS-MERRILL
4. THE HUMAN MIND	*Karl Menninger*	KNOPF
5. GRANDMOTHER BROWN'S HUNDRED YEARS	*Harriet Connor Brown*	LITTLE, BROWN
6. THE ART OF THINKING	*Ernest Dimnet*	SIMON & SCHUSTER
7. A PREFACE TO MORALS	*Walter Lippmann*	MACMILLAN
8. THE ADAMS FAMILY*	*John Truslow Adams*	LITTLE, BROWN
9. THE RAVEN*	*Marquis James*	BOBBS-MERRILL
10. JOURNEY'S END	*R. C. Sherriff*	BRENTANO
11. MARRIAGE AND MORALS	*Bertrand Russell*	LIVERIGHT
12. THE TRAGIC ERA	*Claude G. Bowers*	HOUGHTON MIFFLIN

* This title has not previously appeared in the Monthly Score.

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(Continued from page 164)

makes Antigone express a similar idea, when she is justifying her conduct in disobeying an edict of her ruler in the name of family piety and religious duty. For her, in a clash of allegiances, the final test of conduct is not legal pronouncements, but direct knowledge of the eternal, unwritten laws of which concrete laws are but the imperfect counterpart. Similarly, the law of measure is not to be identified exclusively with any particular codification: it has permanent validity, which intuition can make accessible for concrete circumstances.

A clear enough answer, one would think, to a frequent confusion. And illustrated, one would likewise suppose, by a harmless enough classical allusion, one that would be difficult to better in aptness from the whole range of literature. But not so for Edmund Wilson. Oh, no. In quoting from a Greek play Babbitt had intruded into a realm which Wilson has sought to make his own by means of a set of highly individual and highly emotional theories, of which the most prominent feature is violent opposition to all modern scholars, especially if they are attached to universities or have written authoritative books. His theories are closely bound up with his libertarian, anti-authoritarian, anti-traditional philosophy and his passion against what he considers to be stuffiness, repression, Victorian moralizing, and tyranny. Along with his theories, Wilson also had it firmly in his mind that the humanists are among the arch-perverters of the true classical spirit in invoking the classics, as he had heard they frequently did, in support of their obnoxious doctrines.

Imagine his elation, then, as he read Babbitt's essay looking for something to revolt him, at finding within the first three pages an allusion to Sophocles; and an allusion—glory be!—that mentioned Antigone and the law of measure in the same breath. "The Lord hath delivered him into mine hands!" one can imagine him exclaiming—if the Huxleyan associations of the phrase have sufficiently overshadowed the biblical in his mind. So emotional a moment is not, to be sure, the best fitted for thought and attention; but a scrupulous critic would certainly have paused for a moment to get the meaning of a passage which he was about to subject to ferocious assault. For the great Edmund Wilson, however, a mere glance was sufficient. A mere glance had shown him the "law of measure" and Antigone's speech juxtaposed: therefore, for the colossal Edmund Wilson, Babbitt was making Antigone invoke the law of measure: therefore, off with his head! By a lucky fluke, or from a subconscious realization that something was wrong somewhere, Wilson did not quote Babbitt's passage as I have quoted it above. He omitted the first sentence and the last sentence, which give some of the context and would have warned many readers (the passage is, of course, still clearer in Babbitt's essay than my abridgement of the background makes it), and presented only the middle sentence. If one takes this alone, and neglects the way the sentence is being used, and slurs over the words "one of", it can, of course, be made to look as though it meant what Wilson thought it did.

So dunderheaded a reading naturally vitiated from the start everything that Wilson had to say. But if that were his only fundamental confusion! Let us follow him as he plunges boldly in to do battle for his dream that Greece might still be free from the unspeakable humanist Turks. He quotes the Antigone sentence and bursts out: "This seems to me a grotesque misapplication of the famous speech from Sophocles. Let me point out, in the first place—" there are so *many* stupidities to be cleared up when Babbitt ventures into classical literature! Wilson's

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interruption of himself is to point out that the word "heaven" if translated literally would be "the gods". His comments on this terrifically important point provide a nice preliminary sample of the mixture of pedantry, spleen, and ignorance which informs his excursion into classical scholarship. It is nothing so simple as unfamiliarity with the Greek words for "gods" or "heaven" that Wilson lays to Babbitt: it is a diabolical plot to insert Christian propaganda into a pagan poet. In making this verbal alteration, says Wilson, Babbitt "is following the Victorian tradition of Jebb and Jowett, who, by substituting such Christian words as 'God' and 'heaven' for the pre-Christian conceptions of the Greeks, almost succeeded in giving Sophocles and Plato the aspect of pious English dons". It is too much to expect Wilson to be familiar enough with Babbitt's works to know how funny is the picture of him as a pious Christian. But it is not too much to expect Wilson to know that when such a Hellenist as Jebb, together with practically the whole body of translators of Sophocles before and after him, decides that the spirit of the original in this passage is best rendered by departing from the literal, there is some other reason at work than pious donnishness. The suggestion is simply ludicrous. Was Sophocles, for instance, making a pious English don of himself when, in *Oedipus Rex*, (lines 863 ff.), he referred to those same laws, in a passage exactly parallel, as "those laws sublime, whose birthplace is the ethereal heaven (οὐρανίαν δι' αἰθέρα τεκνωθέντες), Olympus their only begetter"? Most people—but not Edmund Wilson—would think twice before seeking to match Greek scholarship with Richard Jebb and Irving Babbitt.

A year ago, hearing that some of the young men were becoming excited about certain older critics neglected by the generation of the twenties, Wilson did a little rummaging in the past on his own, and brought up—John Jay Chapman (*New Republic*, May 22, 1929). For Wilson "no writer of his generation has so much to say to the younger generation", and he particularly puts him above More and Babbitt (who seem sometimes, says Wilson in his salute to Chapman "actually to be moved by a detestation rather than by a love of literature"—a critical howler unsurpassed even by Wilson). It is from Chapman—and to a lesser extent from T. S. Eliot—that Wilson derives his notions about the perversion of the classics by pious English dons. But in Chapman's hands this line of attack is something very different. There are no more incisive and amusing pages in modern criticism than those in which Chapman gets after the "Christian-Pagan University Humanism" of "the old New-Hellenic Oxford teaching", and particularly after Gilbert Murray, in whose "mouth are the charming accents of all that old-fashioned tinted civilization". "Gilbert Murray . . . sheds a sad clinging Tennysonian morality over Dionysus. Jowett is happy to announce that Plato is theologically sound, and gives him a ticket-of-leave to walk anywhere in England. Swinburne clings to that belief in sentiment which marks the Victorian era, but Swinburne finds the key to life in unrestraint instead of restraint. . . . This contribution of Swinburne's—the hymeneal touch—and Murray's discovery that the word God could be introduced with effect anywhere, went like wildfire over England." (As T. S. Eliot puts it, "As a poet, Mr. Murray is merely a very insignificant follower of the pre-Raphaelite movement".) And finally Chapman's immortal jest, "How this school of poetry invaded Greece is part of the history of British expansion in the nineteenth century".

This, and much more, is all great fun and great criticism. But you don't find Chapman attacking the Greek scholarship of Richard Jebb for rendering "the gods" as "heaven". On the contrary, you find the exact opposite. Last autumn the *New Republic*—presumably at the instigation of Wilson himself—published an essay by Chapman, "Antigone and Prohibition" (September 11). In the course

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of it Chapman had occasion to translate the "famous speech" in which Wilson is such an expert. And how did Wilson's idol translate the controverted word? Exactly as Babbitt did! Here are the lines:

"Nor deemed I thy decrees were of such force
As to o'erride the sanctities of heaven—
Which are not of today, nor yesterday."

(Can you imagine what Wilson would have said if Babbitt had used "sanctities" instead of the more literal "laws"?)

So much for Wilson's attempt at scholarship. The subject was hardly worth the space, but by putting at the forefront of his exposure of Babbitt a point that seemed such concrete evidence of everything that New Republicans and anti-humanists abhor, Wilson effectively gave the impression to his innocent admirers that in the more essential matters that followed he was being equally devastating—instead of being, as we shall see, even more preposterous. Returning from his proof that Babbitt has made Sophocles a "pious English don", Wilson plunges into what he thinks is the heart of the matter: "But Babbitt has turned Sophocles into something even worse and even more alien to his true nature: he has turned him into a Harvard Humanist. In the scene in question, Antigone is not talking about the law of measure or anything remotely resembling it". Now here, of course, we have left Babbitt entirely, since he had not said what Wilson thought he had. As far as humanism is concerned, the discussion would end at this point. From now on, under the impression that he is attacking Babbitt, Wilson is merely giving his views on the character of Antigone, the law of measure, the meaning of "nature" in Aristotle and Rousseau, and the dramatic art of Sophocles as compared with that of Eugene O'Neill. But since he has woven his ideas of Babbitt and humanism into the whole of his irrelevant declamation, and since he has, moreover, on every single topic made a ghastly spectacle of himself, it may be worth while pursuing the inquiry further.

After his round denial of what Babbitt hadn't said, Wilson goes on about Antigone —with the blunders piling up at an appalling rate: "She is justifying herself for her insubordinate conduct in disobeying Creon's edict to perform the funeral rites for her brother. This has not been an act of self-control on Antigone's part; it has been an act of passionate personal loyalty, regarded as excessively rash and wrongheaded by everybody else in the play, including her own sister, whose 'inner check' is more highly developed than Antigone's. When Creon demands how she has dared to break the law, she replies fiercely that such an edict as he has published is contrary to the laws of the gods".

In the first place, as to the "law of measure", it is evident that Wilson identifies it—along with "self-control" and "inner check" —with mild and timid action, and thinks that any vigorous or courageous action must come from its opposite. In other words, he has no idea what the law of measure is. This ignorance of the most famous of ethical doctrines—which most people learn something about in the course of a classical education that fits them to expound Sophocles and Aristotle—completely spoils a number of his later points against Babbitt and More. Antigone was following her religious convictions rather than the law of measure, but you would think that some notion of his confusion in these matters would have dawned on Wilson as he found himself writing that Antigone's act "has not been an act of self-control". Not self-control for a woman, soon to be married, to give up everything, and life itself, to a call of conscience! We are here on the trail of Wilson's real trouble. He is not fighting the humanists: he is fighting the idea that the Greek dramatists ever made their characters act from "ethical" motives or renounce lower aspirations for higher. It is this obsession of

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his—so flagrantly at variance with the most obvious and familiar facts—that causes him to adopt an outlandishly distorted notion of the character of Antigone.

Refusing to concede to Antigone the character that has universally been ascribed to her for her conduct in walking deliberately to her death that her brother might have the burial rites considered fitting in the eyes of the gods, Wilson seeks to explain her nature in a fashion of his own: by making her a Greenwich Village heroine. Her act is one of "passionate personal loyalty"; she is "excessively rash and wrongheaded"; she "replies fiercely" to the questions of her ruler. A few lines further on Wilson says she has a "hasty intemperate insolent nature"; "she is asserting her individual will in defiance of law and expediency—she is making an impulsive and desperate gesture". Now this kind of heroine is certainly more familiar to those who have specialized in New York's post-war Bohemia, in the French symbolists, and in certain authors of the day, than is the Antigone of Sophocles's play. But not to be able to distinguish the two reveals nothing less, as I have said, than an anti-ethical obsession. To maintain his interpretation Wilson is forced to pervert the play beyond recognition. Notice, above, how he meets the problem presented by the very speech from which this whole discussion started, the speech in which Antigone explicitly ascribes her action to loyalty to religious and family duty. For Wilson this is something she "fiercely" hurls at Creon, as though she had made it up on the spur of the moment as a taunt. Was there ever a more "grotesque misapplication of the famous speech from Sophocles", or of any speech? As a matter of fact, the reader or spectator of the play has known from the very first scene, in which Antigone tries to get her sister to join her, that she is impelled primarily by religious conviction.

An even more grotesque misapplication is Wilson's justification for describing Antigone as hasty, intemperate, and insolent. "We are told so explicitly in the play", he says. Yes, but by whom and in what circumstances? (In reality Wilson's statement is quite inaccurate and provides an excellent example of his manner of distorting the evidence to fit his thesis. The Greek which he is thus rendering consists of one word, meaning "passionate", or, if Wilson prefers, "intemperate". "Hasty" and "insolent" are, as T. S. Eliot put it when he caught Gilbert Murray in similar tricks, Wilson's gift.) The answer to that question gives Wilson's whole show away. You would think from his use that the description was a stage-direction supplied by Sophocles himself. As a matter of fact, Antigone is called passionate by the chorus, who are the senators and represent the "official" opinion of the community. (It is unusual to find Wilson, or any New Republican, accepting official opinion against the claims of an under dog.) More than that, this is the senators' opinion only at first. The whole point—*the whole point*—of the play lies in the fact that such an assertion as Wilson's that Antigone's act is "regarded as excessively rash and wrongheaded by everyone else in the play, including her own sister" becomes *the exact opposite of the truth* as the play proceeds. Everybody begins by thinking Antigone wilfully perverse. But one by one they reverse their opinion and come to admit that she was right in her claims of duty to the gods: first her sister, then her betrothed, then the populace, then a sage, then the senators, finally Creon himself. Only Edmund Wilson is left believing her "insolent". And why? Because he cannot admit that the heroine of a Greek drama might have acted from noble motives. For him she must be a Eugene O'Neill character, thresh-ing about hysterically in a decrepit New England farmhouse or a water-front hangout, shrieking to the police that she has poisoned her husband, stabbed her father and married her brother because God told her to.

In all this I am not picking on small points or merely offering an alternative reading of

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Antigone to Wilson's. As everyone knows who has read the play, I am insisting on patent and inescapable and all-important facts. Wilson's interpretation is not an alternative reading: it is a pure eccentricity, unrelated to any possible legitimate understanding of the play. It has nothing to do with his views of Babbitt or humanism. The question at issue is one that should interest far more than humanism can hope to. The question is whether a prominent critic can attack ideas that he opposes by means of gross mutilation of one of the cornerstones of literature—can do that and have it pass unnoticed, unrebuked. So far he has got away almost scot free. Only one objection has appeared, a letter from Mr. O. W. Firkins to the *New Republic*, to which Wilson replied by repeating his nonsense.

Carrying his crazy thesis through to the bitter end, Wilson goes on to say that Antigone's speech can really be turned against the humanists, whom he thinks he is fighting, by the romantics. To accomplish this he quotes Aristotle's comment that Antigone's act, though contrary to a statute, was "right according to nature". Conceding, handsomely, that "Aristotle does not mean by 'nature' quite the same thing that Rousseau does", Wilson adds: "But what Rousseau means does have something in common with what Aristotle means that Antigone means, whereas what Antigone means can't by any possible stretch be associated with Babbitt's 'law of measure' ". (Notice that it is *Babbitt's* law of measure; may the shades of Aristotle rest easy!) I have given this sentence profound and exhaustive scrutiny, and made every allowance for the maze of misconceptions about Babbitt, Antigone, and the law of measure in which Wilson is wandering. Nevertheless, I have been forced to come to the conclusion, with reluctance though without great surprise, that the only possible meaning is the one meaning which it is impossible for an educated man to hold: namely, that Rousseau's conception of man in a state of nature and Aristotle's conception of the true nature of man, are the same, or sufficiently similar for Wilson to try to use Aristotle against what he thinks Babbitt said. Confusion could no further go.

It is at this point that Wilson chooses to adopt the delicate device of calling Babbitt a fool by quoting without translation the Greek lines in which Antigone says that if she seems to be acting foolishly, perhaps she is foolish in the judgment of a fool. In Wilson's mouth this sentiment is much above his average for the occasion in being half right.

Commenting on Babbitt's statement that "perfect poise is no doubt impossible; not even Sophocles succeeded in seeing life steadily and seeing it whole", Wilson says "It is certainly true that in Sophocles' tragedies, the characters are usually remarkable for anything but poise—they are as violent as the people in the plays of Eugene O'Neill. Where the 'law of measure' comes in is certainly not in the conduct of the dramatists' characters". Now presumably, since he says this truculently, Wilson thinks he is making some point here. If so, the point must lie in this argument: Babbitt says Sophocles has poise, deep insight, and a sound philosophy; but Sophocles's characters are often violent; *ergo*, Babbitt is grossly misrepresenting Sophocles. You see the logic. Wilson goes on to say that what Sophocles's art does is "show us spending themselves against each other the rages, the affections, the loyalties, of so many passionate persons, and all to die in the clear air, leaving only with the echo of their tirades the vibration of the taut verse". This confession of what he gets from Sophocles, together with his comparison of Sophocles with O'Neill, brings us to the heart of the matter: Wilson's failure to grasp the difference between an art with a sound ethical background and one lacking it. This in turn, if we could pursue it here, would take us to the question that ultimately divides the two camps of which Babbitt and Wilson are

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spokesmen: the duality of human experience. Let me repeat, however, that this difference of opinion has not dictated the particular arguments which Wilson has used in his article, nor my comments on them. The discussion has not been on the plane of philosophic differences, but on the plane of pointing out the absurdities in a wierdly idiosyncratic and woefully ill-informed outburst. Wilson has shown himself about as near to the true spirit of Sophocles as an Oedipus complex.

The rest of Wilson's screed is of the same calibre. We can only glance at the various points he makes as he picks out bits and launches himself against them. He quotes Babbitt's saying "It would not be easy to argue with any plausibility that the typical modernist is greatly concerned with the law of measure", and then goes on to prove Babbitt correct by trying, very implausibly, to show that "in this respect, our age is no worse than any other". Since his whole argument consists in attacking the illustration which Babbitt used, and since Babbitt's dry remark is so patently within the facts, the question arises whether Wilson really differs with Babbitt's opinion or was merely led to contradict him by seeing an illustration which he thought vulnerable. The first would reflect on Wilson's judgment, the second on his debating tactics. In his present piece of writing, both alternatives seem so likely that I am unable to choose.

In the next item Wilson's dark confusion over the law of measure and the process of mediation comes out again and leads him into a wild-eyed diatribe. Babbitt mentions the obvious and familiar fact that when first principles are involved the law of measure is no longer applicable; the law of measure consists in applying sound principles to particular circumstances, and not in mediating between conflicting principles; when a man is upholding a principle, he cannot afford to compromise with those who hold what he believes to be an erroneous principle. Babbitt's way of putting this truism drives Wilson into a frenzy of incomprehension: he thinks intolerance is being urged. "We might have thought that if the law of measure were valuable anywhere, it would be valuable in the realm of ideas, where the failure sufficiently to observe it has notoriously bred war, persecution and misery from the beginning of the world. Babbitt surely did not learn from Plato, whom he invokes in the next paragraph, that we should be so sure of our own opinions that we need not be moderate with people who happen to have different ones." Pausing to remark that what most people get from "Plato's novel of ideas", meaning the dialogues, "is that the world has a good many aspects and that there is a good deal to be said on all sides" (thus demonstrating that Wilson is as good a Platonist as he is a Sophoclean and an Aristotelian), he says that Babbitt is not on the side of Socrates but of "the judges of Socrates. I doubt whether even Aristotle was so sure that he was right as Babbitt. If Babbitt wants to find a tradition for his policy in dealing with error, he must look not to the Academy and the Lyceum, but to the councils of the Inquisition, the revolutionary tribunal of the Terror and—to come closer to Professor Babbitt's home—Dedham Courthouse and Boston State House".

Now this of course is blithering nonsense, and vicious nonsense. It is not the first time, as I noted in an earlier article, that a humanist has been placed with the executors of Socrates in the *New Republic*. Let me quote Paul E. More's comment on the earlier occasion (in *The Demon of the Absolute*), when he was greeted by a friend with "And so you were one of those who gave the hemlock to Socrates!", and referred to the current *New Republic*: "Well, I picked up the magazine, and discovered that to its reviewer a recent book of mine proved me to be such a one as would have joined the murderers of Socrates, had I been living at the time. And not content with this the writer, grasping at the most awful insult in his vocabulary, declared

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that I had the temper of a banker and resembled the late J. P. Morgan; imagine the exasperation of a reviewer brought to such straits of fatuity!"

It is indeed hard to imagine. I found it hard to believe until I had hunted up the article by Francis Hackett in which it occurred. I would never have believed, had it not stared at me in print, that Edmund Wilson, a critic for whom I formerly had respect, would resort to such a cheap and unprincipled appeal to mob passions. Such stuff is not criticism: it is sheer blackguardism.

For his next point Wilson quotes from both Babbitt and More on the subject of control, proportion, and decorum. As can be imagined, this provoked him into a resounding piece of rhetoric; including a speech in behalf of "our clerks, our factory workers and our respectable professional classes" and their "lack of normal human fellowship and normal human hope and joy". He is so completely at sea as to what the humanists mean by control, so totally unfamiliar with the most ordinary ethical notions, and so confused about "negative" and "affirmative" descriptions of conduct, that I cannot even try here to disentangle matters. "How can one take seriously a philosophy which enjoins nothing but negative behaviour?" he demands at one point, neglecting to explain just what "negative behaviour" would be. Wilson had begun this section thus: "Now why the deuce is virtue, with the humanists, always made to reside exclusively in what Babbitt calls the 'will to refrain'? 'Humanism' says Professor Babbitt . . . 'is not primarily enthusiastic'. So far as I can see, it is not enthusiastic at all". Remember that in the preceding paragraph the humanists have been denounced as being enthusiastic to the point of a dangerous fanaticism. Any stigma will do to beat a dogma. In answer to Wilson's question "Why the deuce—" I will quote from Walter Lippmann's *A Preface to Morals*, a book which Wilson reviewed with much more "enthusiasm" than did Babbitt:

"There is no doubt that in one form or another Socrates and Buddha, Jesus and St. Paul, Plotinus and Spinoza, taught that the good life is impossible without asceticism, that without renunciation of many of the ordinary appetites, no man can really live well. . . . The modern world has assumed that human passions, if thoroughly liberated from all tyrannies and distortions, would by their fulfillment achieve happiness. All those who teach asceticism, deny this major premiss of modernity, and the result is that the prevailing philosophy is at odds on the most fundamental of all issues with the wisdom of the past."

I wish space would permit me to insert the little dialogue I have composed between Wilson and a number of the great ethical teachers, in which their speeches consist of characteristic quotations, with Wilson breaking in after each one with his asinine "Now why the deuce—."

Wilson concluded his attack on Babbitt with a piece of unmatched ludicrousness. Speaking of the unpopularity of the idea of renunciation in the modern world, Babbitt says that the very word has been rarely used by moderns, and names Goethe as an exception. He adds: "Anyone who thinks of the series of Goethe's love affairs prolonged into the seventies, is scarcely likely to maintain that his *Entsagung* was of a very austere character even for a man of the world, not to speak of a saint". It is a crime these days, as is well known, to mention sexual license without ecstatic approval. Wilson rises to the challenge and exclaims: "It seems to me that assumptions are here being made in regard to sexual morality which require a good deal of proving on Babbitt's part". And so on, into a discussion of the relation of morality to happiness, with demands for proofs, accusations of refusal to argue, and a declamation about "the unexamined prejudices of a Puritan heritage". And all because Babbitt suggested drily that Goethe was not conspicuous for his asceticism!

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Coming to More's contribution to *Humanism and America*, Wilson outdoes himself. He quotes two sentences from More on the subject of "the irresponsibility of the artistic temperament", and then produces no less than twelve hundred words of absolute irrelevance. He defends the art-for-art's-sakers of the last century on the grounds that they were forced to their views and their actions by economic conditions. I suppose the implication is that our contemporaries of the same persuasion have the same excuse. Wilson's defense, if valid, would seem to be an excellent reason for not shooting esthetes or kicking them out of one's home, but hardly a good reason for not criticizing their philosophy. Or if it ought to operate in this last field, how does Wilson justify himself for attacking the humanists after demonstrating repeatedly, to his own satisfaction, that their point of view was "produced inevitably by a particular situation"? He expatiates on the value of the discipline of art, which I didn't know anybody doubted. He goes into an elaborate defense of artistic experimentation, with illustrations from botany, geometry, mathematics, and Alexandrian literature. Here again I didn't know the question had been raised. It is certainly not raised by More's criticism of certain experiments. He proves again his unfamiliarity with More's work by saying, "Paul Elmer More disapproves of works of art which do not point explicitly the moral of self-control".

This complete ignorance of the work of the men he is assaulting, together with the wierd notions of the classics which we have seen, makes the following sentence one of the most wildly incongruous on record: "I will venture to say that the humanists' high-handed habit of disposing jeeringly of contemporary writers whom they plainly haven't read is an even more serious scandal to their cause than their misrepresentation of the ancients, whom they have at least painstakingly studied". This is apropos of a passing remark of More's on James Joyce. But what does it profit a man if he knows *Ulysses* by heart and thinks that the law of measure means mildness, gets the same kind of "kick" out of Sophocles and Eugene O'Neill, and thinks Aristotle and Rousseau were practically agreed on man's nature? There was a time, a few years ago, when Wilson made it a rule not even to review a book without knowing a man's work thoroughly, and never to write an article about an author unless he had read most of his writings. But that was when life and the twenties were young and glorious, and the horrid ogre of humanism had not raised its ugly head. Now he is content to write vicious abuse about men he has never read or understood—and to accuse them of "disposing jeeringly of contemporary writers whom they plainly haven't read"!

Wilson reserves his nastiest personal abuse for his final observations on More, apropos of More's essay on the cosmology and theology of A. N. Whitehead. There is no need of going into the merits of the case here, beyond remarking that Whitehead's monistic philosophy is the kind against which More has argued all his life, in a row of distinguished books, and that his discussion of Whitehead is a lucid, temperate exposition of his principal objections. Indeed the merits of the case are hardly relevant, since Wilson seems not to have understood even Whitehead. He is capable of talking about "the scientific findings—the conception of the 'event', for example, as the ultimate unit of both the organic and the inorganic worlds—upon which Whitehead has based his metaphysics". Even if the notion of a fist without a hand—which is what the conception of the event means—made sense, it would not be a "scientific finding" or anything like it. The degree of his comprehension of More's position is revealed by his thinking that instead of opposing Whitehead's philosophy, More "ought to find it reassuring".

Unable to understand either man sufficiently to treat the issues philosophically,

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sensing only that with Whitehead's views, if he understood them, he would agree, and that with More's views, if he understood them, he would differ, Wilson resorts to heaping insults on More. He cannot concede that More's opposition to the latest rage in monistic philosophers of the flux may come from a reasoned position: "I cannot avoid coming to the conclusion that Mr. More's primary objection is to having anyone find out anything new". If the philosophers of the past had had More's attitude, says Wilson, unleashing more of his personal animus, "we should have no philosophy at all, and Mr. More would have no Plato and no Platonists to divert his declining years". According to Wilson, More is "terrified" by everything in the modern world, an idea which he amplifies in the following pretty piece of writing:

"It is as if Mr. More, on one of his sides, were a man who might once have imagined becoming a great philosopher like Whitehead or a great poet like Joyce, but as if some other element in his nature—which he tries to foist upon us, too, as the universal and eternal moral law of the 'inner check'—had operated to make him afraid of philosophy and poetry, so that he had finally reached a point today where, in spite of his fine intellect and his esthetic sensibility, he was unable even to allow himself to profit by the philosophy and poetry which other men had made."

Even more amazing than the disgraceful pettiness of this charge of spite arising from thwarted ambitions, is the sheer blundering unwisdom of it. Think of such a charge against the author of the Shelburne Essays coming from a critic whose career in criticism to date consists of a batch of apprentice work of varying quality scattered in magazine files and one forgotten book! I will forbear comment on Wilson's ultimate slur, in which he tries to distort an insignificant typographical detail into an example of petty petulance on More's part and a reflection on More's manners. Wilson has in the very act forfeited his right to make such charges against anybody, let alone Paul Elmer More.

It is difficult to imagine just what satisfaction Wilson can get from such an exhibition as his "Notes on Babbitt and More". It is one thing to scribble such stuff angrily on the margins of a maddening book. But to allow it to get into print, and even into a book, is a very different thing, and quite incomprehensible. In any case, it is clear that the effect of this kind of writing is the exact opposite of the effect intended. Robert Shafer has correctly named it "self-defeating abuse". The keen members of the younger generation, with whom lies the ultimate decision in these matters, will not be slow to catch the significance of the tone which Wilson feels it necessary to use in staving off the humanists, nor will they be slow to see through the shoddy thinking and shoddy preparation lying behind the tone. It will be clear to them, as it is clear to many others, that such writing as Wilson's and that of the other men who succumbed to the Anti-Humanist Myth in their nonage and have never recovered, betokens the break-up of that hoary myth. Incredible charges piled on incredible charges, and launched in frenetic, boundless abuse, have only the effect, with the only kind of readers that count, of convincing them that something of worth lies behind the smoke and that such over-protestation comes not from bold confidence but defensive mistrust. This is the principle fact that stands clearly revealed in the writings which have been surveyed in these articles. It should appear still more clearly in the few remaining specimens to be taken up.

Scribners used to be a magazine of great literary and intellectual distinction; but it succumbed to the spirit of the nineteen-twenties in the last gasps of the decade, and now goes in for such articles as "Saving the Infant Class from Hell", "These Fifty-Fifty Marriages", "Who Made Sex an Obsession?", "As a Jew Sees Jesus", "The Ex-Married Confess"—and attacks on Babbitt and More.

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Following Mary Colum's January article, the next contribution to the campaign was C. Hartley Grattan's "What Is This Humanism?" (*Scribners*, April). After a flourish of satire, Mr. Grattan introduced a radical novelty into the current anti-humanist literature: he made a conscientious, painstaking attempt to tell his readers what humanism is. If his explanation was not very good, the reason was not lack of effort, but lack of familiarity with the kind of thinking that humanism represents.

Mr. Grattan's writings make it evident that he has acquired all his ideas from very recent sources, and always from writers who have the "scientific" bent. Not that Mr. Grattan is interested in the sciences of external nature; on the contrary, he is exclusively preoccupied by politics, ethics, and art. But he mistrusts any opinions on these ancient topics which he does not feel are strictly in accord with "modern science". This means, in practice, that he pays no attention to what has been written in the past, and concentrates on altering his ideas to conform to the latest publications in "scientific psychology", "sociology", and the philosophy of the science-intoxicated philosophers. This method of intellectual nourishment, while clearly useful to a modern free-lance journalist, is not exactly an ideal preparation for understanding or explaining humanism. For example, I was puzzled by repeated statements that the humanists derive their values from "intuitive glimpses of the antecedently real"; "In the eyes of the humanist the apprehension of the antecedently real is what gives men knowledge", etc. I had never met any such idea in the writings of Babbitt, whom Mr. Grattan was expounding. The matter was cleared up when I discovered that Mr. Grattan had just been reading "Dr. John Dewey's latest and most important book, *The Quest for Certainty*", which "is in part devoted to a devastating critique of the doctrine". As you may be sure, "Dr. Dewey discards this outmoded notion and evolves a theory of knowledge from the methods of experimental science". But the learned Doctor's epistemological researches were quite beside the point, since the "outmoded notion" was the doctrine that "behind the shifting appearances of this world there was a pre-existent perfect scheme". In his anxiety to make use of the latest bulletin from the source of all wisdom, Mr. Grattan had got this doctrine confused with the humanist contrast between the perception of the shifting and peripheral in human nature, and the abiding and central there. So radical a confusion between cosmology and practical psychology hardly makes for clear exposition.

Again, in the matter of the freedom of the will, Mr. Grattan relied on a very up-to-date authority, this time entirely relevant. As he rightly says, "The humanist asserts free will as a fact. . . . If there is no free will he thinks there can be no humanists". And so Mr. Grattan set about disproving free will and thus showing the humanists that they are non-existent. Now there has been a great deal written about the will, by and large, East and West, through the centuries of civilization. Most of the great thinkers have left their opinion on the subject. But Mr. Grattan is under the compulsion of being at once scientific and up-to-the-minute, and consequently bases his discussion on a recent book called *Fatalism or Freedom*, by C. J. Herrick, "the best modern scientific statement of this problem I have ever seen". Now this great authority on the subject of the human will turns out to be an expert on rats' brains at the University of Chicago. Being rather baffled by the now-you-have-it-and-now-you-don't attitude toward the will revealed in Mr. Grattan's quotations from Dr. Herrick, and having an endless curiosity about the "science" which our litterateurs revere, I hunted up the sage's books; not only the one recommended by Mr. Grattan, but also his chief work, *The Brains of Rats and Men*, and, as my fascination grew, his latest, *The Thinking Machine*. These books are among the funniest I have ever looked into. The

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philosophical thinking is so bad, and the accompanying pretensions so great, that one can only roar with laughter.

I particularly recommend the chapter in *Fatalism or Freedom* in which Dr. Herrick explains Natural Freedom. These are some of his examples: A locomotive is free to make sixty miles an hour on the track but not across country; a caged bird is not free to fly; a bankrupt is not free to endow a college; if a thing is free from a monetary standpoint, a charge cannot be made for it. The whole book is like that: complex juggling back and forth among the various meanings of words, with no attempt at definition, but with constant claims to scientific procedure and incessant digs at the "mystical", "transcendental", "magical", "supernatural", etc., notions of those who believe in free will. I have not enjoyed anything of the kind so much since I read *Instinct*, an authoritative work by a prominent sociologist, L. L. Bernard. In making clear the meaning of "instinct", Professor Bernard severely criticized the use of the word by "litterateurs untrained in the scientific terminology of psychology", giving as examples Milton's "chariot instinct with spirit" and Wordsworth's "genius instinct with music".

It is from the eminent specialist in rats' brains, Dr. C. J. Herrick, that Mr. Grattan derives his assurance that the humanists' conception of the will "is a figment of the imagination, without validity to anyone with an elementary knowledge of modern scientific thought on the subject". Other humanist tenets are disposed of as easily and as decisively. For instance, the division between man and nature: "This duality is an idea developed before the experimental technic was applied to man", and so of course can have no worth. This dictum is driven home by one of Mr. Grattan's numerous quotations from Dewey. The hardest part of replying to the critics of humanism, I sometimes think, is being forced to read so many excerpts from the foggy, foggy Dewey.

A fitting companion piece to Edmund Wilson's appeared in the *New Republic* a few weeks later, Malcolm Cowley's "Angry Professors" (April 9). Lacking Wilson's genuine indignation, Cowley brought to the occasion greater familiarity with the subject, and a gift for intentional rather than for accidental distortion; the irresponsible satirist providing comic relief for the grim, bludgeoning reformer. Not that Cowley lacked a certain seriousness; on the contrary, a "social passion" was everywhere manifest, to the surprise of those familiar with his work hitherto.

One of Cowley's principal achievements was to demonstrate, even more effectively than had Wilson and Mrs. Colum, that humanism lacks sex appeal. Instead of merely one or two, Cowley had industriously unearthed no fewer than six passages, from the combined works of Babbitt and More, to illustrate his thesis that humanism was contaminated at its source, "the moral atmosphere of our eastern universities in the 1890's", resulting in "a profound belief in chastity". Some of his examples seem to support his case imperfectly, as Babbitt's remark about Goethe and renunciation, borrowed from his colleague Wilson; and More's facetious explanation of the popularity of detective stories: "There alone murder is still simply murder, adultery simply adultery, theft simply theft, and no more about it". But there is no mistaking the general drift of Cowley's impressive array of evidence: the leading humanists are, on the whole, inclined to note a distinction between sexual license and sexual virtue. As Mme de Staël exclaimed after looking over the chapter on virginity in the *Génie du Christianisme*: "Alas, poor Chateaubriand, his book is not going to be successful".

Another achievement of Cowley's was to give substance to an addition to the Anti-Humanist Myth which had hitherto been floating around rather vaguely. I mentioned in an earlier article Mr. Alter Brody's charge of anti-Semitism, which had appeared in a

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letter to the *New Republic*. A short time afterwards Mr. Llewellyn Jones, literary editor of the Chicago *Evening Post*, published a book entitled *How to Read Books*. A dozen pages, an object lesson in how to misread books, were given over to one of the most conscienceless distortions of humanism yet published, a maze of misquotations and vicious slanders. One remark was that humanism has "in its latest phases taken into itself all the other reactionary movements, including anti-Semitism". When I asked Mr. Jones on what evidence he based this last charge, he replied, with engaging candor, that he had come across the charge in some article or other, he was not sure just where. It was obvious what had happened: Mr. Brody's letter was having its intended effect, and Mr. Jones was content to give the prestige of his name and position to a baseless accusation contained in the hot-headed letter of a fool (to borrow a word from Mr. Brody). And thus do scruples go out the window: the Myth must prosper.

But Malcolm Cowley was not satisfied with the vague manner in which this particular item of controversy had been handled by his predecessors: he decided to present some "evidence". This was a bit difficult, but he managed it: he quoted part of a sentence in which three Jews had been mentioned in their literary capacity, supplied the word "Jews" as though it were part of the original, stated that their Jewishness had been used as an "accusation", and presented the whole as an illustration of humanist snobbishness. A letter to the *New Republic* protesting against this mangling of the evidence, and making clear the author's meaning, drew notes from both Cowley and Brody reiterating the charge!—thus proving conclusively, what was in any case evident from the first, that their interest had not been in the author's intention, but in a meaning which could be wrested from his words; that is, that they were not engaged in righting a fancied injustice, but in trying to score by means of racial prejudice. Cowley's note was a little gem of disingenuousness, in four parts: that the evidence warranted a charge of anti-Semitism; that he had never made such a charge; that anyway the humanists *are* prejudiced against Jews; and that moreover they are prejudiced against the Irish, too. I hope he appreciates my kindness to him in explicitly mentioning, in these articles, the Irish origin of three of the anti-humanists.

The three-sided lecture on humanism at Carnegie Hall on May 9, by Irving Babbitt, Henry Seidel Canby and Carl Van Doren, provided an excellent illustration of one of the prevalent confusions in our criticism. The point will probably best be made clear by mentioning the distinction, brought into such sharp relief by the occasion, between the critic and the literary toast-master. The literary toast-master performs an important, a necessary function in the literary life of a community. His task, when well done, calls for a rare combination of qualities. Both Dr. Canby and Mr. Van Doren have done distinguished and immensely valuable work in their capacity as literary toast-masters. Confusion enters only when they are mistaken, and mistake themselves, for critics, even critics of the impressionist or psychological types—not to mention critics of ideas. It is true that the level of ideas in this country during the post-war decade made it hardly more difficult to serve as a toast-master of ideas than of bright new talents; but the distinction remains, nevertheless. Light should have been shed on the prevalent confusion by the enormous disparity in quality between the address of Professor Babbitt and those of Dr. Canby and Mr. Van Doren.

Dr. Canby's talk finally revealed the meaning of his various remarks on humanism. He is trying, it seems, to start a humanist movement of his own, one which is to be a war on machinery. "We are slaves to the elevator," he exclaimed. "We are slaves to the automobile. . . . We are slaves, of course,

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to the radio." Babbitt's humanism, for Dr. Canby, is "fiddling while Rome is burning". In his opening words he challengingly presented his audience with this choice: "Either I have been deluding myself for the last ten years, or the one great issue before us is the conflict between humanism and mechanism". It seems a shame to take advantage of Dr. Canby's unguarded alternatives, but the obvious truth is that anyone who succumbed to the shallow men-and-machines talk which the "new historians" and the ecstatic sociologists have made popular during the last ten years has indeed been deluding himself in a most ignominious fashion. Mr. Van Doren's address was evidently intended to be a Swiftian demolition of humanism. But the range of perception and the quality of taste revealed by his remarks indicated that he had derived more inspiration from the Yahoos than from the other creations of Swift's genius. Harry Hansen, as chairman, served the occasion efficiently, but a few days later was led to make some observations in his column that achieved the record in bad taste for the whole carnival of anti-humanist crudity: he used his experience as chairman as a vantage point from which to poke fun at one of the speakers. It should not be hard to guess which one.

Dr. Canby had invited Mary Colum to report the Carnegie Hall proceedings for the *Saturday Review of Literature*. According to Mrs. Colum, "None of the debaters got very near the subject at all, except, perhaps, Henry Canby for a few minutes", and "Carl Van Doren made a witty and brilliant address". But it was to Professor Babbitt that Mrs. Colum gave most of her attention, with a few thrusts at other humanists for not putting on the kind of show she had hoped for: "If only some few youths passionate in their belief in humanism could have got drunk over it, or been arrested for it, how inspiriting it would have been!" Mrs. Colum must have followed Babbitt closely, because she managed to spot the one single passage in his address on which could be hung her customary plea for anti-respectability and her familiar dogma that irregular living is essential to the artist. The whole of Mrs. Colum's direct reference to Babbitt's talk concerned an anecdote which he related in four sentences. He was discussing the various uses of the word "life", and to illustrate the use which limits the word to emotional living on the naturalistic plane, to sheer emotional intensity, he mentioned the occasion on which Paul Verlaine gave a lecture at Oxford: "He appeared on the platform with a patch over one eye, one of his arms in a sling, and a game knee, and began by declaring that a man could not hope to be a poet unless he had *lived*". Certainly a perfect anecdote to bring out the limitations of that conception of "living"; and certainly not a criticism of Verlaine's gifts as a poet, which in fact Babbitt insisted on.

But Mrs. Colum is obsessed by the curious notion that if anyone illustrates an ethical or philosophical idea which she doesn't favor out of an author whom she admires, the author is being condescended to, jibed at, mocked, and his merits as a man and an artist are being callously disregarded. It never occurs to her to examine the real purpose and tone of the allusion. Still less does it occur to her to debate the point at issue. She assumes that she is called upon to defend art from the Philistines, and literature from the ravages of the "philosophic mind". Accordingly, she devoted most of her article, "Debating Humanism" (*Saturday Review of Literature*, May 24), to an impassioned defense of Verlaine and a caustic reiteration of her warnings to Babbitt to keep out of literature and confine himself to discussing the qualities which make "solid citizens". The extent to which Mrs. Colum missed the point of Babbitt's remarks, and the extent to which she is herself committed to the conception of "life" as emotional intensity is revealed by her query: "Why should it seem odd that Verlaine should have told Oxford

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that no man can become a poet without experience of life?" Another sentence of Mrs. Colum's on Babbitt has high confessional value: "It is what he calls his humanism that is difficult to understand". Ah, that's just it.

But this disability, unfortunately, does not prevent Mrs. Colum from writing about Babbitt on every occasion. Indeed he would seem to be something of an obsession with her—as he is with quite a few of us. Soon after Carnegie Hall appeared her second *Scribners'* attack on him (June issue), called "Literature, Ethics, and the Knights of Good Sense". In this article Mrs. Colum adopts what seems to me to be a brilliant piece of strategy: she goes back of Babbitt to Aristotle. Now this is an outflanking movement which is a sheer stroke of genius. There can be no question that if it is successful, Babbitt will be in a position to be absolutely annihilated. I recommend it to the attention of all anti-humanists.

In her first move in this new and promising direction, Mrs. Colum gets after only Aristotle's *Poetics*, the source of "many useless battles and much spiritual and intellectual waste". To Aristotle's *Ethics* she is very generous, pronouncing it "one of the scriptures of mankind" and conceding to Aristotle that "when he writes about ethics he is consummate". Now here, I think, Mrs. Colum's position is not yet fully worked out. I suspect that when she looks further she will find that the *Ethics* has to go, too, if she wants to make her demolition of Babbitt complete. She will find, for instance, that the humanists' "too simple-minded acceptance of the old, elementary division of man into two selves", which "modern psychology has been making antediluvian", has one of its main supports in the *Ethics*. The logic of her position will then lead her, I am confident, to reject the Aristotelian logic, and to follow that up with his metaphysics: Aristotle is too much of one piece for her to risk letting any of him survive. With Aristotle out of the way, Babbitt's position will indeed be precarious, and Mrs. Colum will have victory in sight. She will merely have to dispose of Confucius and Buddha—and Babbitt will be discredited forever. If she should then feel that Paul Elmer More was still worth her attention, her job would be relatively simple: she would have but to wipe out Plato and Christ—and where would More be? Mrs. Colum is on the right track. I tremble for the future of humanism.

Her onslaught on Aristotle's *Poetics* is doubtless merely preliminary to more extensive forays in that highly tactical terrain. It will not, I think, in itself suffice. Her indignation rather handicapped her, so that we get little beyond complaints that Aristotle showed himself to have the literary insight of "an intelligent but not very artistic statesman whose tastes inclined to good detective stories and melodrama", by reason of his emphasis on the crude theory that a drama should have a beginning, a middle, and an end—that is to say, should have a plot. I do not doubt that Mrs. Colum will do better when she really sets out to lay Aristotle low.

The rest of Mrs. Colum's article was her usual perfervid, marvelously muddled plea for "all those qualities that make for passionate or strong or profound living of life". A few words from Norman Foerster on her old specialty of classicism and romanticism sent her off on a typical rampage. "If he is a classicist, he will emphasize reason and ethical imagination and subordinate the senses and feelings", Professor Foerster had remarked. This looked to Mrs. Colum like an affront to the emotions, so she devoted several hundred words to this counter-thesis: "Intellect, certainly, holds the reins with the Classicist, but emotion is in no sense subordinate". If you think *that* is confused, you ought to see what happens to it in two pages of amplification and illustration. (June *Scribners*, pp. 606-7.) By the time she has reached the end of her demonstration that one faculty can be under the control of another without being subordinate to it—a demon-

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stration which involves the invention of a complex piece of psychological theory—she has convinced herself that Professor Foerster's remark was equivalent to saying "that emotion is an inferior quality in which the great Classicists have no truck".

Part of Mrs. Colum's endeavor was to rescue several romantic poets from Babbitt's wantonness and perversity in using quotations from them to illustrate his maddening ideas. For one moment she even has a lapse from her terrific admiration for Aristotle's *Ethics*, citing parallel passages from Aristotle and William Blake and claiming for the latter "a higher wisdom". Taking a cue from John Livingston Lowes's *The Road to Xanadu*, she says that a remark of Babbitt's on "The Ancient Mariner" makes it "plain that he misunderstands the whole poem," and quotes some stanzas to prove it. But what is really plain is that both Professor Lowes and Mrs. Colum have failed to understand Babbitt, and that their failure to understand him comes from a deep confusion on the whole subject of transgression and expiation. (Without going into the matter, I will throw them the hint that having love gush in one's heart, and blessing "unaware", are not actions, while "admiring the color of water-snakes" is one). . . . It has remained for an anti-humanist, by the way, to deliver the most damning judgment on Mrs. Colum's criticism. Commenting in the Brooklyn *Eagle* on my earlier remarks on her, Mr. Edward Cushing rebuked me for not realizing that there is "a tradition of gallantry to be observed" in literary controversy.

The campaign against the humanists came to a climax in *The Critique of Humanism*, Hartley Grattan's hastily but efficiently assembled collection of essays and pasquinades. As an experiment in coöperative pamphleteering the book is an interesting departure in controversy. The quality and the viewpoints of the thirteen contributors are extremely diverse, but on the whole the book is representative and will remain a revealing record of the state of American criticism at the close of the decade of the twenties.

About a third of the book had appeared in magazines, so that a number of old friends meet us as we look into it. With misguided bravado, Allen Tate allowed his "The Fallacy of Humanism" to make its third appearance in print. He has altered it considerably but not, unfortunately, in the direction of intelligibility or cogency. A documentary proof that More is not a Catholic in communion with Rome, that Babbitt is no kind of Christian at all, and that Foerster is invincibly secular, really gets us nowhere, however elaborately it may be decorated with chatter about naturalism denaturalizing itself, resultant situations, accepting rejection, infinite regression, and so on. Mr. Tate has repaired some of the more conspicuous misquotations mentioned by Mr. Shafer, but not all of them, as the present typographic arrangement brings out strikingly in one case. At the top of page 137 you will find Professor Foerster made to reverse what he is quoted as saying at the top of the parallel page. Mr. Tate has likewise removed a number of his more offensive expressions, but he has also learned from the gentlemen of the press to talk about "self-righteous snobbery", "ill-breeding", "moral Fascism". Among the revised passages is the one in which Mr. Tate misquoted himself when replying to Mr. Shafer. His third version of what he "really said" is no less confused than the others, and gives the unmistakable picture of a man treading water furiously in the hope that firm land will come up under him. Nevertheless, Mr. Tate knows far better than any of his companions in the *Critique* the worth of the men he is assailing. His statement "The case of the American humanists against modern culture is damaging to the last degree. The truth of their indictment, negatively considered, cannot be denied", disposes of everyone else in the book.

Henry Hazlitt's *Nation* article, which was the first of the more excited journalistic re-

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torts, becomes a contribution to the *Critique* by the addition of a "constructive" supplement on the question of values. Mr. Hazlitt derives his scheme of values from Bertrand Russell, John Dewey, and I. A. Richards, pointing out that the scheme is very rudimentary, only some general principles by which "we may finally arrive" at a proper hierarchy. He does not say what we are to do in the meantime. Mr. Hazlitt's ability as a destructive critic remains unimpaired, as witness this decapitation: "The phenomenon of house-breaking, common to nearly all adult dogs, is in itself sufficient to discredit Mr. Babbitt's belief that only man can control his immediate desires".

I felt sure that some one would break the news about Sophocles to Edmund Wilson before his piece was put into book form. But the only significant change is the interpolation of a sentence which reveals that Wilson has suddenly become an expert in all of Babbitt's works: " 'The laws unwritten in the heavens' is one of Babbitt's favorite quotations: he has used it again and again in order to give us the impression that Sophocles has endorsed the humanist 'will to refrain' ". From this I gather that Wilson has begun to read a little of Babbitt, and may actually have got as far as the first fifty pages of *Rousseau and Romanticism*. Otherwise his statement would mean that he had gone nearly to the end of *The New Laokoon* or *Democracy and Leadership*, and this I am inclined to doubt. In fact I doubt whether Wilson can now ever bring himself to read Babbitt's books at all. It is hardly thinkable that he will thus inflict on himself the realization of the injustice he has worked. There is no more curious feature of our criticism than the spectacle of a man of Wilson's ability writing copiously on French literature in complete ignorance of the work of a compatriot admitted to be the leading English-speaking critic in the field. Wilson has been able by his own efforts to drag himself an inch or two above the later currents of nineteenth century French literature, but a knowledge of Irving Babbitt would have given him a really adequate perspective. In the same way he would have received a flood of light on his own experiences and been enabled to make his novel *I Thought of Daisy* a profound study of contemporary life instead of the inchoate document it was rendered by being still half immersed in the material it sought to transcend and interpret.

Wilson toned down some of the more objectionable of his personalities in putting his article in the *Critique*; but he did not have the grace to remove the worst one entirely, with the result that in its altered form it makes no sense whatever; which to be sure is an improvement. In a similar way, when Malcolm Cowley prepared his article for the book he modified his anti-Semitism charge somewhat; but that he left it in at all would indicate that he was impelled not by a sense of justice, but by external suasion or by chagrin at having been caught in a whopper. The *New Republic* dies but it never surrenders.

Mr. Grattan has expanded his *Scribners* article by prefixing a section that summarizes the ideas of the late Walter Rathenau, the German equivalent of our own King C. Gillette and Alonzo B. See. One of Mr. Grattan's remarks, "Before God created man, man created God, as G. Stanley Hall used to tell us", is his spiritual autobiography. He swallowed completely the whole educational program of dear old Grandfather Hall, and he has never had a suspicion that he did not thus acquire the sum of human wisdom. There is something very appealing about his faith in "science", and in his utter devotion to the whole round of Victorian rationalism. Sometimes, to be sure, his native sense breaks through his acquired stupidity. Not long ago he made the somewhat startling remark that "what he [the critic] needs to do is return to criticism as it was before the nineteenth century, when it was simply common sense". Mr. Grattan would find it a useful exercise of the historical imagination to try to imag-

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ing Dr. Johnson's commentary, or Dryden's or Ben Jonson's, on his statement (in the same article) that "moral judgment has no place in criticism", or on his conviction that the ultimate truth on the question of the will was attained the other day by a Chicago expert on rats' brains.

Of the remaining eight papers in the *Critique of Humanism*, only two are in any way respectable, those of Lewis Mumford and Yvor Winters. Mr. Mumford always writes excellently, and sometimes his matter is as sound as his manner is impressive. But he is not at his best when, as in his present paper, he is attacking humanism or making his vague proposals for the philosophy of the future. His device for attacking humanism is an interesting one. It consists in giving a burlesque account of humanism, balancing humanism against another line of thought more congenial to him, and then saying that they must both be transcended in a new synthesis. Two years ago he paired humanism and Menckenism. In his present paper he pairs humanism and what he calls the New Mechanism, meaning Dewey, Beard, and company. Doubtless if the esthetes come forward prominently he will contrast humanism with the New Estheticism, and if the Southern group of critics catch public attention we shall have a contrast with the New Regionalism, and so on. In each case humanism will be shown to be inferior to its running mate, and both will be rejected for the Great New Synthesis, which will be vaguely hinted at in a mass of emotional platitudes and rhetoric.

Mr. Mumford's remarks on humanism call for no special comment; he never gets near enough to it to bother with. Such assertions as that the humanists "are conscientiously ignorant of science", the reason being their "fear that either their case or their personal vanity might be hurt by acknowledging the genuine achievements in the scientific tradition"; or that the inner check is "an effort to protect the personality from the risks and mischances that all creatures must run in the course of their development", are merely confessions that Mr. Mumford cannot meet the humanist's ideas except on the plane of petty *ad hominem* slurs. One thing must be granted to Mr. Mumford: a meticulous care in acknowledging the source of his more important thoughts. For instance, "Every ideal end which ignores the nature of the universe and of man's constitution tends, as Mr. John Dewey has wisely pointed out, to be both meretricious and ineffectual"; and "That we are entirely creatures of the external world, or as the solipsists would have it, entirely creators of that world is, as Messrs. Geddes and Branford have pointed out, contrary to human experience".

Sometimes the pleasure I have in reading Mr. Winters comes from being illuminated or informed on matters of poetry; at other times I fear the pleasure comes less from what he says than from my having succeeded in understanding him. There are also times, it must be added, when I do not understand him at all, and still other times when his comments on philosophic and general subjects are interesting but wondrously idiosyncratic. I had all four of these experiences in reading his contribution to the *Critique*, "Poetry, Morality, and Criticism", in about equal degrees. In dealing with individual poets Mr. Winters is in some ways the best critic in the country. But in general esthetic problems his comment often remains at the level of shop-talk while apparently intended to be criticism. Mr. Winters' chief defect is a failure to distinguish between work that appeals to him for absolute reasons and work that appeals to him for technical reasons. This leads to his occasional vagaries, such as his comparison of Allen Tate's "The Subway" to Keats' "On the Sea". Mr. Winters is quite certain that Paul Elmer More and Stanley Chase are wretched critics of poetry, but his demonstration remains as ineffective for me as his claim that William Carlos Williams is "a major writer" and Wallace Stevens "profound".

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The contributions of Kenneth Burke and Henry-Russell Hitchcock, Jr., are interesting chiefly as *tours de force*. Mr. Burke's "The Allies of Humanism Abroad" demonstrates how quickly he can turn a negligible amount of information on a complex subject into a plausible paper. He skates nimbly over the surface of Maurras, Massis, and Maritain, and would doubtless succeed completely in giving the effect of expertness if ingenuity alone were sufficient equipment for dealing with the large subjects those men bring up—subjects which Mr. Burke reveals in a hundred ways he is dealing with for the first time, as witness his surprised and surprising discovery that "Saint Thomas, at least as interpreted by M. Maritain, seems to have avoided anything as rigid as, for instance, the Protestant doctrine of predestination". Even in discussing T. S. Eliot, Mr. Burke manages to limit himself to specious ingenuities. Humanism hardly figures in his paper, except for the required quota of taunts and an unusually complicated misconception of the "inner check". You would never suspect from his article that Mr. Burke is probably the cleverest man in the book. Mr. Hitchcock establishes, primarily, how long a paper—it is the longest in the book, as one guesses soon after beginning it—can be written on a practically non-existent subject, "Humanism and the Fine Arts". After showing that Mr. Mather is a good critic but a dubious humanist, Mr. Hitchcock is forced to depend on his copious thoughts about art and his vague conviction (documented in a postscript by skimming through the index of *The New Laokoon*) that he is against the humanists. Both he and Mr. Burke attempt to beat the humanists with Jacques Maritain, but like most dabblers in neo-Thomism, they have seen only the esthete in Maritain and entirely missed the scholastic. A bit of the real scholastic discipline would do them both a world of good—and they would not then be writing for critiques of humanism.

John Chamberlain's chapter, a discussion of humanism and fiction, starts off with a resounding mistake—"The peculiar domain of literature, say the New Humanists, should be the normally and typically human, or what is most richly and typically human"—and keeps up the same pace to the end. His ignorance about humanism is nicely balanced by his general state of muddle about everything. See, for instance, his defence of Dos Passos' *Manhattan Transfer* on the remarkable grounds that it exposes conditions which ought to be remedied. The reports of the Vice Committee as literature! Mr. Chamberlain's discussions of fiction, in the *Critique* and elsewhere, are usually fresh and penetrating. But in philosophic and social matters he is, like a number of his colleagues, not yet more than a cocky young ignoramus. Mr. R. P. Blackmur's paper, "The Discipline of Humanism", was apparently included in order to bring the chapters up to a grim and ominous thirteen. It merely echoes all the other anti-humanists.

In reviewing *Humanism and America* I intimated that the inclusion of a piece by Bernard Bandler II was a mistake. All concerned have reason to rejoice that his presence in the *Critique* indicates that he has now gone where he belongs, whatever they may think of his taste in manifesting his new allegiance in a way that enables his new friends to capitalize on the notoriety that attaches to a deserter. Mr. Bandler defends his conduct by saying "As I understand it the discussion is about ideas, not words, personalities, or parties", and then writes an elaborate attack on the personality of Paul Elmer More. If, as he seems to imply, Mr. Bandler was formerly a great admirer of More's, the fact is a most remarkable tribute to More's style, for that is all that could have appealed to Mr. Bandler: there was never a more complete failure to understand a man or his ideas.

It would be kinder not to mention in any detail Burton Rascoe's contribution to the *Critique of Humanism*—kinder, at any rate,

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to the other contributors, most of whom must have been heartily ashamed at appearing in the same volume with this fourth-rate journalism of a road-company Mencken. But Mr. Rascoe's colleagues should realize that they are not separated from him by any real gulf; he merely does more clumsily and transparently the same things they do; he is merely the absurdity to which their kind of criticism reduces. Mr. Rascoe shows positive genius in taking the controversial methods of the other anti-humanists and exposing them by carrying them to their inevitable conclusion. Where they fail to understand the ideas they are opposing and produce weird distortions, Mr. Rascoe gets humanist doctrines exactly upside down. Where they reveal their faulty scholarship in matters so complicated that exposure involves much space and labor, Mr. Rascoe goes wrong in the simplest matters of accessible fact. Where they effectively devote their main energy to satire and caricature, which are usually so hard to meet, Mr. Rascoe produces satire so heavy-handed that it meets itself. Where they distort by quoting sentences out of contexts, with or without small adaptations, Mr. Rascoe plunges boldly in, lifts out clumps of words, and throws them together in any form —even ungrammatical—that fits his purpose. Where they betray unfamiliarity with philosophy and rigid thinking, Mr. Rascoe shows that he cannot think at all. Where they confuse the issues by irrelevancies and trivialities, Mr. Rascoe makes irrelevancies and trivialities his principal method. Where they slip sometimes into tasteless personalities, Mr. Rascoe fills his whole paper with gutter scurrilities.

There are so many examples of all of these devices that it is hard to know which to present. Mr. Rascoe's triviality and his inaccuracy appear, for instance, in his making a point of More's use of the word "camouflage" in a preface to a book by George Gissing. It "has not been used by anyone with a sense of style", he says, since the war. He had not bothered to notice that the preface was published in 1918. Mr. Rascoe's triviality, inaccuracy, and scurrility appear when he ascribes Middleton Murry's opinion of Babbitt's *Rousseau and Romanticism* to the death of Murry's wife—although the review appeared three years before she died. His whole discussion of Murry and T. S. Eliot is a farrago of misinformation and bad taste. He thinks Murry an exponent of humanism, instead of one of its bitterest enemies; he devotes pages to mocking Eliot's religion. As to getting humanist doctrines upside down, he can say of Babbitt: "His special detestation is the Christian virtue of humility".

Mr. Rascoe's ability to misunderstand Babbitt is simply stupendous. His most ludicrous example, occupying two pages, is one I referred to in the first of these articles: his confusion over Babbitt, Rousseau, and the deserted children. It has to be seen to be believed (pp. 121-2). I said before that nobody would be fooled by Mr. Rascoe's howler, but in this I underestimated anti-humanist stupidity: Mr. Harry Salpeter swallowed it whole and incorporated it in an article in the *Outlook*. But I am sure that most readers of Mr. Rascoe's article got Babbitt's real meaning even as it was quoted there, removed from its train of argument, with an important word conveniently omitted ("moral" before "responsibility") and sandwiched between grotesque comment. I cannot forbear devoting some space to a choice example of what happens to Babbitt in Mr. Rascoe's fine Sicilian hand. "Babbitt's essential ideas boil down to these", he says, and gives this as the first result of his peculiar method of boiling:

> "Property is the one sacred fact. It does not matter how that property is attained. With the privileges accruing to the ownership of property go the obligations of 'noblesse oblige', that is, of being a gentleman. What those obligations are Professor Babbitt has not specifically defined. He has indicated them in a horrifyingly nebu-

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lous way by saying that 'in the eyes of the humanist . . . such terms as "justice" and "liberty", and above all (at least in its application to man) "nature" . . . is not true virtue'. That is, in the eyes of the humanist, the gentleman, i.e., the great property owner or man in power is privileged to exercise the *droits de seigneur*, whip-lash his slaves, and be any kind of sadist and slave-driver he wants to because to the Humanist the terms 'justice' and 'liberty' have no virtue."

Here is the passage in Babbitt on which the above was based:

"One's conception of the constant and unifying factor in life will appear in one's use of general terms. It is plain that the humanist and the Rousseauist clash radically in their definitions. As a result of his elimination of the dualistic element the Rousseauist has, as I have remarked, set up a 'virtue' that in the eyes of the humanist is not true virtue; and so likewise for such terms as 'justice' and 'liberty' and above all (at least in its application to man) 'nature'. If there is to be a reintegration of the dualistic element into these words there would seem to be needed an art of inductive defining somewhat similar to that which Socrates brought to bear upon the sophists."

I know it will seem perverse of me to many, but I still maintain the opinion I recorded before, that Mr. Rascoe is being stupid, not dishonest.

Mr. Rascoe, in a word, delivers the death blow to the Anti-Humanist Myth. Extended to the limit by the shrill excesses and egregious follies of Walter Lippmann, of Mary Colum, of Edmund Wilson, of Malcolm Cowley, by the whole journalistic fanfaronade and its summation in the *Critique of Humanism*, in Burton Rascoe the Myth blows up completely. No cause could survive such a champion. The Great Anti-Humanist Myth is gone, beyond resuscitation.

* * *

To any who may have followed this protracted survey to the end, I offer as an excuse for its excruciating length the sad fact that the flood, the sea, of imbecilities let loose on the two most distinguished of American critics could hardly have been examined in shorter space. Indeed even this much space called for the exclusion of quantities of equally revealing material. There was, for instance, a whole series of articles in a magazine called the *Thinker*, by John Dewey, Horace Kallen, Harry Elmer Barnes, and other such giants of liberal thought. There was the violent and pretentious attack on More in the *Symposium*, in which Felix Morrow combined the usual socialist arguments with unusually vicious misrepresentation (including a partial quotation designed to show More as an advocate of war). And other articles and references innumerable.

I should like to have been able to take up the ecstatic reviews of the *Critique of Humanism*. And Dr. Canby's lengthy "Post Mortem", epitomizing in a handy form the fallacies and shallownesses of his philosophy. Dr. Canby is well advised, as are the other anti-humanists, to emphasize the "post mortem" line just now, when the lull after last spring's agitation lends it effectiveness. They had better work it for all it is worth: they will never have so good a chance with it again. Burying humanism season after season will eventually begin to seem a little foolish.

The opponents of humanism have done their best, and their best is a sorry spectacle. There is not one—*not one*—opponent who can meet the first test of controversy: to be able to state his adversary's position. That is to say, there is not one dangerous antagonist to the group aggressively challenging the party in power, and not one capable defender of the passing order. That is the shocking self-indictment of criticism in America.

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